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## **Between Worship and Bribery: Charity in the Shadow of Electoral Politics**

**Syah Awaluddin**

Universitas Pattimura, Indonesia

**Jantje Tjiptabudy**

Universitas Pattimura, Indonesia

**Barzah Latupono**

Universitas Pattimura, Indonesia

**Sartje Sarah Alfons**

Universitas Pattimura, Indonesia

\* Corresponding Author: [syah.awaluddin@iainambon.ac.id](mailto:syah.awaluddin@iainambon.ac.id)

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### **Abstract:**

This article examines the blurred boundary between genuine *ṣadaqah* (charitable giving) and covert vote-buying during Indonesia's 2024 general elections, offering an Islamic legal analysis grounded in the concepts of *niyyah* (intention), *ikhhlāṣ* (sincerity), *riyā'* (ostentation), and evidentiary principles such as *qarīnah* (contextual indicators). While political actors often disguise electoral incentives as acts of worship, Islamic jurisprudence provides a normative framework to distinguish between sincere charity and manipulative political strategy. The study adopts a normative-juridical approach, combining descriptive-qualitative analysis with both classical Islamic sources, such as the Qur'an, Hadith, *fiqh*, and *tafsir*, and contemporary legal regulations, particularly Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning Elections. Data were collected through library research and analysed thematically using Islamic legal reasoning, legal maxims, and selected case illustrations from the 2024 elections. This methodological framework enables a nuanced interpretation of intention in Islamic law—not based on verbal confession but inferred through circumstantial and behavioural indicators. The main contribution of this research lies in its articulation of an evidentiary model rooted in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*)—a structured framework for evaluating the ethical and legal status of charitable acts in politicised contexts based on indicators recognised in Islamic legal thought. This model equips scholars, regulators, and the public with the tools to detect and assess electoral misconduct disguised as religious virtue. This study

presents a clear novelty in the form of a matrix of legal indicators—derived from Islamic legal ethics—as an original analytical tool to objectively evaluate political intent in charitable acts during elections. By integrating classical Islamic thought with contemporary electoral challenges, this article contributes a unique perspective to Islamic legal studies and democratic governance, laying the groundwork for a reformed jurisprudential approach to political ethics in Muslim-majority societies.

**Keywords:** charity; vote-buying; Islamic law; electoral ethics.

## Introduction

General elections are a fundamental pillar of the democratic system,<sup>1</sup> serving as a mechanism for selecting leaders who possess both the capacity and integrity to carry out the people's mandate. Ideally, elections should be conducted fairly, transparently, and free from coercion, including financial influence. However, in practice, vote-buying remains a serious threat to the integrity of elections in Indonesia.<sup>2</sup> This practice does not always appear in the form of direct cash payments but may be disguised as social assistance, religious donations, or charitable giving—acts which, in certain contexts, are referred to as "political charity".<sup>3</sup> In a religious society like Indonesia, *sadaqah* (charity) is regarded as a highly encouraged act of worship, making it difficult to distinguish between sincere giving and politically motivated donations. This raises a critical question: can acts of charity performed by political candidates during election campaigns still be classified as worship, or should they be deemed a form of *risywah* (bribery), which is prohibited in Islam?

Islamic law places great emphasis on the contractual nature and *qasd* (the intention) behind actions in determining their legitimacy. Charity, in its essence, is a meritorious act based on a valid *akad* (contract or agreement) between the giver and the receiver, ensuring that the act is free from coercion or hidden motives; however, when driven by political motives to influence voters' choices, its moral and legal value may be transformed into a blameworthy deed. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) once declared, "Allah curses the one who gives a bribe and the one who takes it" (Hadith narrated by Abu Dawud).<sup>4</sup> In the context of elections, such practices

<sup>1</sup> Amancik Amancik et al., "Choices of Law for Democratic Regional Head Election Dispute Resolution Institutions in Indonesia," *Jambura Law Review* 6, no. 2 (July 22, 2024): 304–38, <https://doi.org/10.33756/jlr.v6i2.24792>; Utang Rosidin, "Penguatan Dewan Kehormatan Penyelenggara Pemilu Dalam Penegakan Hukum Kode Etik Penyelenggara Pemilu," *LITIGASI* 25, no. 2 (October 31, 2024): 384–406, <https://doi.org/10.23969/litigasi.v25i2.18699>; Nurlaily Nurlaily, Agusta R. Minin, and Dinesha Samararatne, "The Substantive Justice in Regional Elections: A Philosophical and Sociological Comparison of Asian, European, And African Countries," *Jurnal IUS Kajian Hukum Dan Keadilan* 13, no. 1 (April 26, 2025): 107–27, <https://doi.org/10.29303/ius.v13i1.1656>.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Aspinall et al., "Vote Buying in Indonesia: Candidate Strategies, Market Logic and Effectiveness," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 17, no. 1 (March 2017): 1–27, <https://doi.org/10.1017/jea.2016.31>.

<sup>3</sup> I. Made Yunita, Anak Agung Putu Sugiantiningsih, and Mohammad Hidayaturrahman, "The Vote Buying among Madurese Muslim; Islamic Law Standpoint," *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 19, no. 2 (December 31, 2024): 444–69, <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-lhkam.v19i2.13025>.

<sup>4</sup> Salah Ud Din, Sharifah Hayaati Syed Ismail, and Raja Hisyamudin Raja Sulong, "Combating Corruption Based on Al-Siyasah al-Syar'iyah Perspective: A Literature Review," *International Journal of Ethics and Systems* 40, no. 4 (November 1, 2023): 776–807, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOES-12-2022-0312>; Muhamad Fajar, "Examining the Concept of Gratification in the Qur'an: Gone Theory



have the potential to undermine the principle of fairness, as political choices are no longer based on a rational assessment of the candidates' qualities but are instead driven by material incentives.

Unfortunately, positive law regulations, such as Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning Elections, have not explicitly addressed the phenomenon of political charity. Although Law No. 7/2017 does not explicitly mention the term “political charity,” it explicitly prohibits any material giving intended to influence voters. For instance, Article 280 paragraph (1) letter (j) states that during the campaign period, it is forbidden to promise or provide money or other materials to election campaign participants. This means that any party (candidates, campaign teams, etc.) is prohibited from directly giving money or goods to voters or campaign participants during the campaign period. The phrase “other materials” encompasses all forms of gifts or material assistance, including alleged political charity. Regrettably, while Law No. 7 of 2017 generally prohibits all forms of money politics, including giving money or materials to campaign participants, as regulated in Article 280 paragraph (1) letter (j) and the criminal sanctions stipulated in Article 523 paragraphs (1) to (3), it does not specifically regulate the phenomenon of “political charity” taking place under the guise of almsgiving or social assistance. Candidates frequently exploit this normative gap to disguise vote-buying practices as acts of worship, for example, by distributing staple goods or cash shortly before election day.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, material giving that outwardly appears as charity has the potential to be used as a covert form of money politics, which is challenging to prosecute due to the lack of a clear definition and specific regulations regarding “political charity” in the Election Law.

This phenomenon became a crucial issue in the 2024 elections. Several public figures were involved in controversies that sparked public debate. Ganjar Pranowo, the number 3 presidential candidate, came under scrutiny after a video of him distributing something during his morning exercise went viral. Although it was denied, it still fuelled accusations of vote-buying. The Chairman of PAN, Zulkifli Hasan, was also criticised after being recorded distributing Rp. 50,000 to the public, which PAN claimed was part of his charitable practice.<sup>6</sup> Vice-presidential candidate number 2, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, denied similar accusations after distributing milk during Jakarta's car-free day. A more controversial case involved Gus Miftah, who was seen distributing money to residents in Pamekasan, East Java while wearing a shirt featuring the image of presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto. Gus Miftah was also seen campaigning for the Prabowo-Gibran pair. However, the campaign team denied any official connection, describing the activity as a personal act of charity from a businessman.<sup>7</sup> This pattern reflects a broader trend observed during the 2024 regional elections. The Indonesian Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu)

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Analysis of Bribery, Gifts, and Official Integrity,” *Asyiahid Journal of Islamic and Quranic Studies (AJIQS)* 6, no. 2 (June 16, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.62213/0jsgsm49>.

<sup>5</sup> Syahrul Ramadhan et al., “Fenomena Politik Uang Pada Pemilihan Umum Di Indonesia Solusi Dan Tantangannya,” *ULIL ALBAB: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin* 3, no. 3 (February 3, 2024): 43–49, <https://doi.org/10.56799/jim.v3i3.2960>.

<sup>6</sup> Aryo Putranto Saptohutomo, “Zulkifli Hasan Bagi-bagi Rp 50.000, Politikus Diminta Tak Halalkan Segala Cara,” *KOMPAS.com*, September 14, 2023, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2023/09/14/21490191/zulkifli-hasan-bagi-bagi-rp-50000-politikus-diminta-tak-halalkan-segala-cara>.

<sup>7</sup> Jaka Budi Santosa, “Sedekah Atau Risywah,” May 1, 2024, [https://mediaindonesia.com/podiums/detail\\_podiums/2949-sedekah-atau-risywah](https://mediaindonesia.com/podiums/detail_podiums/2949-sedekah-atau-risywah).



received 130 reports of alleged vote-buying incidents during the quiet period and on election day. These reports included instances of distributing money or other materials allegedly conducted by election participants or campaign teams.<sup>8</sup>

Such practices of political charity create a dilemma between protecting the freedom of worship and the necessity of maintaining the integrity of democracy. Therefore, it is essential to have a legal approach that distinguishes between sincere charity as an act of worship and charity with a transactional political motive. In this regard, Islamic law offers a robust analytical framework through its emphasis on intention and principles of evidence. This study is guided by the following research question: How can Islamic legal principles, particularly those concerning intention (*niyyah*) and evidentiary standards, be applied to distinguish between genuine charitable giving and covert vote-buying during election campaigns in Indonesia?

Previous studies, such as those by Hepi Riza Zen,<sup>9</sup> Khoiril Padilah & Irwansyah<sup>10</sup> Mujiono Hafidh Prasetyo,<sup>11</sup> and Putra et al.,<sup>12</sup> have discussed vote-buying and election regulations, but they have not specifically addressed the practice of political charity from the perspective of Islamic law and the system of evidentiary standards related to intention.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, this article offers a novel approach by integrating the concepts of *sadaqah* (charity), *riyā'* (ostentation), *ikhhlās* (sincerity), and the principles of the evidentiary system in Islamic law. In Islamic jurisprudence, the concept of *sadaqah* (charity) is regarded as a virtuous act that must be performed with *ikhhlās* (sincerity), free from any ulterior motives, such as seeking political gain or public recognition. Al-Ghazālī, in his seminal work *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, defines *ikhhlās* as an act of purification of intention solely for the sake of Allah and that *riyā'* (ostentation) can nullify the spiritual rewards of charitable acts due to the intention to show off. Regarding evidentiary standards in Islamic law, classical scholars such as Ibn Qudāmah in Al-Mughnī and Al-Zuhaylī in Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuhū discuss the use of *qarīnah* (contextual indicators), *shahādah* (testimony), and *iqrār* (confession) as means to infer intentions when they are not explicitly stated. These methods allow for the assessment of a person's internal motives based on external evidence, which is particularly relevant in evaluating the authenticity of charitable acts during electoral campaigns.

Contemporary studies have also explored the intersection of Islamic law and electoral practices. Mokodompis et al., in their article "Money Politic In Elections:

<sup>8</sup> Bawaslu RI Terima 130 Laporan Dugaan Politik Uang, 2024, <https://www.metrotvnews.com/play/b3JCrQ0z-bawaslu-ri-terima-130-laporan-dugaan-politik-uang>.

<sup>9</sup> Hepi Riza Zen, "Politik Uang Dalam Pandangan Hukum Positif Dan Syariah," *Al-'Adalah* 12, no. 1 (2015): 525–40, <https://doi.org/10.24042/adalah.v12i1.205>.

<sup>10</sup> Khoiril Padilah and Irwansyah, "Solusi Terhadap Money Politik Pemilu Serentak Tahun 2024: Mengidentifikasi Tantangan Dan Strategi Penanggulangannya," *Jurnal Educatio* 9, no. 1 (2023): 236–50, <https://doi.org/10.29210/1202322821>.

<sup>11</sup> Mujiono Hafidh Prasetyo, "Kejahatan Politik Uang (Money Politics) Dalam Pemilihan Umum Kepala Daerah Terhadap Konstruksi Pemerintahan," *Administrative Law & Governance Journal* 3, no. 3 (2020): 464–80, <https://doi.org/10.14710/alj.v3i3.464-480>.

<sup>12</sup> Rino Sundawa Putra, Faisal Fadilla Noorikhsan, and Riska Sarofah, "Problematisa Penegakan Pidana Politik Uang," *Jurnal Ilmu Politik Dan Pemerintahan* 10, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.37058/jipp.v10i1.10824>.

<sup>13</sup> Ismail Jalili et al., "The Implementation of Tanqih Al-Manath Theory in Ushul al-Fiqh: An Analysis of Marriage Law Issues in Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mizani: Wacana Hukum, Ekonomi Dan Keagamaan* 11, no. 2 (2024), <https://kwasuspace.kwasu.edu.ng/handle/123456789/5105>.





Islamic Law Perspective," argue that the use of money to influence voters is considered *risywah* (bribery) in Islamic jurisprudence and is, therefore, prohibited. They assert that electoral candidates should rely on their capabilities and integrity rather than financial inducements to gain public support.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, Sholeh examines political promises within the framework of Islamic theology and jurisprudence, highlighting the necessity for sincerity and the fulfilment of promises made during electoral campaigns. He discusses the conditions under which political promises are deemed binding and the implications of unfulfilled promises on the moral and legal standing of political actors.<sup>15</sup>

The significance of *niyyah* (intention) is underscored in Islamic teachings, as reflected in the hadith narrated by Umar ibn al-Khattab: "Actions are judged by intentions, and each person will be rewarded according to their intention." This principle emphasises the importance of examining the underlying motives behind actions, particularly in the context of political activities masquerading as charitable deeds. To address the phenomenon of political charity within the framework of Islamic law, this study poses several interrelated inquiries. First, it explores the ontological foundation of *ṣadaqah* in Islamic theology and jurisprudence, aiming to clarify its essential meaning as both a spiritual act and a form of social responsibility. Second, it examines how Islamic legal epistemology conceptualises *niyyah* (intention) in acts of worship and how this internal element can be assessed in the context of charitable giving during election campaigns. Third, it seeks to identify the distinguishing features between sincere religious charity and covert vote-buying, particularly when the outward form of both acts appears similar. Finally, the study investigates how the evidentiary principles of Islamic law, such as *qarīnah* (contextual clues), *shahādah* (testimony), *iqrār* (confession), and *bayyīnah* (proof), can be applied to objectively evaluate the presence of political intent behind charitable acts. These questions form the basis for a normative framework that not only deepens scholarly understanding of Islamic legal ethics but also offers practical tools for evaluating the legitimacy of political behaviour within a religious society.

## Methods

This study employs a normative-juridical approach with a descriptive-qualitative method to analyse Islamic legal principles related to *ṣadaqah* (charitable giving), *niyyah* (intention), and standards of proof within electoral practices. Data were collected through library research, drawing on primary sources such as the Qur'an (particularly Surah al-Baqarah: 261–274), Hadiths (notably those narrated by Umar ibn al-Khattab), classical jurisprudential works like *Al-Mughni* by Ibn Qudamah and *Al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuh* by Wahbah al-Zuhayli, as well as authoritative Qur'anic exegeses including Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Jalalayn, and Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī. Secondary sources include academic journals, media reports, and official documents concerning the 2024 general elections. The data were analysed using thematic legal analysis, focusing on primary Islamic legal concepts, such as *ikhhlāṣ* (sincerity), *riyā'* (ostentation), and *qarīnah* (contextual evidence), along with legal

<sup>14</sup> Syahrul Mokodompis et al., "Money Politic In Elections: Islamic Law Perspective," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir'ah* 16, no. 2 (December 26, 2018): 126–37, <https://doi.org/10.30984/jis.v16i2.708>.

<sup>15</sup> M. Asrorun Niam Sholeh, "Political Promises in the Lens of Islamic Theology and Jurisprudence: A Case Study of Surabaya Mayor Election 2020," *Walisono: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 28, no. 2 (November 30, 2020): 145–70, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.28.2.6985>.



maxims like *al-umūru bimaqāṣidihā* (actions are judged by their objectives). Data validation was ensured through source triangulation, which involved comparing classical and contemporary texts to verify the consistency and contextual relevance of the interpretations. This study not only offers normative interpretations of Islamic legal norms but also applies them to contemporary case studies involving alleged political charity, providing an ethical and legal assessment of religious acts within politicised contexts.

## Result and Discussion

### Distinguishing Charitable Intent from Political Bribery

In Islam, *qasd hasan* (good intention) is the fundamental basis of every action. Deeds are judged by their intentions, as said in the hadith: “Verily, actions are but by intentions” (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim).<sup>16</sup> To distinguish *sadaqah* (sincere charity) from political bribery, a set of fiqh-based indicators is essential, focusing on intention, consistency of action, and accompanying signs. In the context of politicians making charitable donations, such indicators are vital in discerning between genuine almsgiving and covert political manoeuvring. One crucial marker is *ikhlas* (sincerity), which entails that the act is performed purely for the sake of Allah, devoid of any desire for praise or worldly reward. The Qur'an states: “And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion...” (Al-Bayyinah: 5).<sup>17</sup> In practical terms, sincere charity avoids any form of direct or indirect persuasion to vote, lacks political attributes such as party logos or campaign materials, and refrains from excessive public exposure that may imply self-promotion. In electoral contexts, empirical studies have shown that voters often interpret material aid as transactional support, particularly when it is delivered near election time.<sup>18</sup> *Istiqamah* (consistency) is another critical indicator, as per the hadith that states, “The most beloved deeds to Allah are those that are continuous, even if they are small” (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim).<sup>19</sup> A consistent pattern of charitable behaviour reflects the purity of intention. This can be identified through sustained acts of charity predating the campaign period and a well-documented record of ongoing social engagement.

Additionally, the absence of worldly expectation is a key principle. The Qur'an affirms: “We feed you only for the countenance of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude” (Al-Insan: 9). Acts of charity should not be driven by aspirations for popularity, office, or political endorsement. Therefore, sincere giving excludes political messaging or appeals for support, and any speech or statement made in connection with the act of giving should be free from campaign rhetoric. Moreover,

<sup>16</sup> Lisma Meilia Wijayanti and Setiaputri Aisahningsih, “Urgensi Niat Belajar Menurut Syaikh Al-Zarnuji Dalam Kitab Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Thariqat at-Ta' Allum,” *Muaddib: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 1, no. 1 (May 2, 2023): 1–12.

<sup>17</sup> Muhamad Sidik Afandi, Miftakhurozaq Miftakhurozaq, and Muna Erawati, “Instilling Creative Spirit and Improving Work Ethics through Hypno Spiritual Teaching,” *ATTARBIYAH: Journal of Islamic Culture and Education* 3, no. 2 (December 31, 2018): 174–204, <https://doi.org/10.18326/attarbiyah.v3i2.174-204>.

<sup>18</sup> Mollie J. Cohen, Euiyoung Emily Noh, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, “Vote Buying, Norms, Context, and Trust in Elections,” *Comparative Political Studies* 58, no. 4 (March 1, 2025): 647–79, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140241252099>.

<sup>19</sup> Pathur Rahman, “Konsep Istiqamah Dalam Islam,” *Jurnal Studi Agama* 2, no. 2 (December 31, 2018): 87–97, <https://doi.org/10.19109/jsa.v2i2.3055>.



avoiding ostentation is a vital ethical consideration. The Qur'an acknowledges: "If you disclose your charitable expenditures, they are good; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you" (Al-Baqarah: 271). Over-publicising acts of charity may suggest image cultivation rather than spiritual intent. Genuine charity is often conducted anonymously or discreetly, with a focus on the recipient rather than the donor, and without campaign-related narratives on social media.

The source of funds is equally important. According to a hadith: "Indeed, Allah is Good and accepts only that which is good" (Reported by Muslim).<sup>20</sup> Almsgiving must derive from lawful income. Contributions financed through illegitimate means, such as corruption or unexplained campaign funds, are not religiously valid. Transparent sourcing of funds is, therefore, essential to ensure the moral legitimacy of the act. Finally, attention to the recipient's real needs is an ethical necessity. As stated in the hadith: "Whoever feeds a hungry believer, Allah will feed him with the fruits of Paradise" (Reported by Abu Dawud).<sup>21</sup> Genuine acts of charity consider the practical needs of the beneficiaries, such as food, clothing, and medicine, rather than campaign materials like T-shirts, calendars, or branded bags.

These indicators can be summarised in the following matrix, contrasting pure charitable intentions with political bribery:

**Table 1.** Comparison of Sincere Charity and Political Bribery Based on Intention Framework

Object	Indicator	Motive	Purpose
Sincere Charity	- Consistently performed, not limited to specific periods	- Seeking the pleasure of Allah (SWT)	- Attaining spiritual reward and closeness to Allah
	- No political symbols or campaign materials	- Fulfilling religious obligations	- Promoting social welfare and equity
Political Bribery	- Funds sourced from lawful earnings	- Altruistic concern for others	
	- Occurring predominantly during election periods	- Gaining political support or votes	- Securing electoral victory
Political Bribery	- Accompanied by political symbols or promises	- Enhancing personal or party image	- Achieving political power or influence
	- Funding sources may be questionable		

A deeper understanding of these indicators requires observing contextual

<sup>20</sup> Ali Farkhan Tsani et al., "Halal and Thayyib Food in Islamic Sharia Perspective," *International Journal Mathla'ul Anwar of Halal Issues* 1, no. 1 (March 20, 2021): 97–109, <https://doi.org/10.30653/ijma.202111.34>; Muhammad Syaiful, Nirzayana Azimatul Azkiyah, and Muhammad Luqman Hakim, "Pengaruh Makanan Dan Minuman Halal Terhadap Kesehatan Tubuh Manusia," *Al-Bayan: Journal of Hadith Studies* 1, no. 1 (July 27, 2022): 26–38.

<sup>21</sup> Aqsa Tasgheer, Tehreem Fatima, and Syeda Aima Bokhari, "Global Hunger Crisis and Sustainable Development Goal: A Prophetic Approach of Food Security and Hunger Eradication," *Tanazur* 5, no. 4 (a) (December 31, 2024): 17–38.



behaviours and social settings. In Islamic jurisprudence, intention must be directed solely to Allah, not human approval. If one's charitable act aims to gain electoral sympathy, the intention is tainted with worldly ambition. For instance, sincerity—being the heart of worship, including charity—is compromised when a donation is made with the expectation of political return. True sincerity is reflected in acts devoid of political symbols, quietly performed and without solicitation of support. Conversely, when charity is associated with campaign merchandise, broadcast on social media, or linked to appeals for votes, these become *qarinah* (factual indicators) of political motives.<sup>22</sup>

Likewise, consistency is a strong indicator of authenticity. Charity driven by divine intention manifests in a long-standing commitment to giving well before any electoral contest. Someone who regularly gives outside the election period and continues to do so afterwards demonstrates genuine dedication. Sudden acts of charity emerging only during election seasons suggest instrumental rather than spiritual motives. The principle of expecting no return is also pivotal. True charity is neither accompanied by direct nor indirect appeals for political gain. *Qarinah*—as observable signs—can help evaluate these motives. If charitable acts occur solely during the campaign and coincide with political messages, the political intent becomes evident. Similarly, avoiding *riya'*—the desire to be seen and praised—is critical. Campaigns masked as a charity, involving lavish donations, media documentation, and viral posts, point clearly to political image-building rather than genuine goodwill.

Equally important is the origin of the charitable funds. They must stem from halal sources and remain unlinked to campaign budgets or questionable finances. Tracing the origin of these funds is essential. If the source is a political party or derived from corrupt practices, the charity is invalid from a shariah standpoint. Financial opacity may even indicate political corruption. Applying these indicators not only helps distinguish sincere charity from vote-buying but also provides a framework for communities to objectively assess the integrity of political candidates.<sup>23</sup> To clarify this application, the following Table illustrates *qarinah* as a tool for evaluating charitable intention:

**Table 2.** *Qarinah* (Indicators) as Evidence in Assessing the Intention Behind Charitable Acts

Indicator	Righteous Political Intention	Self-Serving Political
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<sup>22</sup> Rizka Halida et al., "Vote-Selling as Unethical Behavior: Effects of Voter's Inhibitory Self-Control, Decision Toward Vote-Buying Money, and Candidate's Quality in Indonesia Election," *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* 10, no. 2 (October 12, 2022): 570–87, <https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.5643>.

<sup>23</sup> Vladimir Shchukin and Cemal Eren Arbatli, "Clientelism and Development: Vote-Buying Meets Patronage," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 34, no. 1 (January 1, 2022): 3–34, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09516298211061515>.





	(Public Interest)	Intention
Objective	Promoting public welfare	Seeking power or personal votes
Social Impact	Empowering the wider community	Benefitting selective groups
Shariah Legitimacy	Sincere and transparent	Manipulative and image-focused
Policy Example	Targeted subsidies without political motives	Pre-election giveaways for votes
Charity Example	Consistent year-round giving	Emerging only during campaigns
Shariah Legitimacy	Morally and legally valid	Flawed due to insincere intent

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) has firmly stated that both offering and accepting "serangan fajar", literally translated to "dawn attack" in English, a form of vote-buying, are haram (forbidden) in Islam. This practice involves distributing money or goods to voters shortly before elections to influence their choices. MUI asserts that leaders should be selected based on their competence and trustworthiness, rather than material incentives. According to MUI's Fatwa issued in 2018, any request or provision of rewards related to the nomination of public officials is haram, as it constitutes *risywah* (bribery) or facilitates bribery.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, MUI warns the public not to be swayed by monetary offers during elections, as the giver may not have sincere charitable intentions. MUI calls for a fair and dignified electoral process, urging the public to choose leaders based on their integrity and ability to fulfil their duties rather than being influenced by financial inducement.<sup>25</sup> To substantiate charity with electoral motives, several instruments may be used as evidence, including:

**Table 3.** Evidence of Charitable Donations with Electoral Motives (Political Bribery)

Instrument	Electoral Intent Indication	Proof Mechanism
Timing of Donation	Occurs during the campaign period	Monitoring reports, time-stamped documentation
Location	In voter-concentrated areas	GPS data, field reports
Recipient Targeting	Directed at key voting blocs	Recipient lists, community reports
Political	Featuring campaign	Political insignia, banners,

<sup>24</sup> Muhammad As'ad, "Fatwa Mui Melawan Korupsi: Analisis Sejarah Efektifitas Fatwa MUI Tentang Haramnya Suap Dan Korupsi Di Awal Era Reformasi," *Tafaqquh: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Kajian Keislaman* 11, no. 1 (June 3, 2023): 1–26, <https://doi.org/10.52431/tafaqquh.v11i1.851>.

<sup>25</sup> Asep Syarifuddin Hidayat, Nur Rohim Yunus, and Muhammad Ishar Helmi, "The Contribution of the MUI Fatwa in Reducing the Culture of Corruption," *SALAM: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Syar-i* 10, no. 2 (April 15, 2023): 595–608, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sjsbs.v10i2.31976>.



Attributes	symbols/logos	campaign gear
Track Record	No previous history of giving	Digital archives, community testimony
Source of Funds	Legitimacy or legality is questionable	Bank records, campaign audits
Witness Testimony	Observers note influence attempts	Recipient accounts, electoral monitors
Public Declarations	Including post-donation appeals to vote	Speeches, social media posts

Hence, political donations must be assessed against *qasd* (the backdrop of intention). Islam provides measurable indicators of virtuous intent that can be verified outwardly through *qarinah*. A charity that is sincere, consistent, politically neutral, and financed through lawful means epitomises righteous deeds. In contrast, charitable acts seeking votes or sympathy amount to covert electoral bribery.<sup>26</sup> Using the fiqh-based lens of intention and *qarinah* as corroborative evidence, both society and electoral monitoring bodies are better equipped to evaluate the moral and legal validity of political charity.

**Electoral Almsgiving: Legality under Contemporary Indonesian Islamic Law**

In Indonesia’s democratic context, the practice of vote-buying disguised as charitable donations or social assistance represents a critical challenge to the integrity of elections.<sup>27</sup> Explicitly, regulations issued by the General Elections Commission (KPU) and the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) provide the legal basis for addressing such covert practices.<sup>28</sup> These regulatory frameworks reflect a *metamorphosis of Islamic law*, wherein ethical and normative values of Islam, such as *ṣidq* (honesty), *‘adl* (justice), and *amānah* (trustworthiness), are transformed into binding legal principles within the electoral system.<sup>29</sup> In Islamic jurisprudence, *ṣadaqah* (charitable giving) is a virtuous act intended to seek divine pleasure and assist the needy, free of worldly gain. However, when charitable giving is manipulated as a political tool to sway voter preferences, its essence shifts towards *risywah* (bribery), which is unequivocally prohibited in Islam due to its corrosive effect on justice and public morality. This ethical transformation is mirrored in Indonesia’s electoral regulations.<sup>30</sup> KPU Regulation No. 14 of 2024 governs campaign fund management

<sup>26</sup> Heru Syah Putra, “Determinants of Vote Buying in Local Head Election in Indonesia,” *Jurnal Bina Praja* 9, no. 2 (November 28, 2017): 205–18, <https://doi.org/10.21787/jbp.09.2017.205-218>.

<sup>27</sup> Najwa Khalilah Harahap et al., “Electoral Integrity at Stake? Islamic Law and Indonesian Legislation on Vote Trading,” *Al-Risalah Jurnal Ilmu Syariah Dan Hukum*, May 31, 2024, 30–41, <https://doi.org/10.24252/al-risalah.vi.48967>.

<sup>28</sup> Riastri Haryani, “Optimalisasi Kewenangan Bawaslu Sebagai Lembaga Pengawas Pemilu Dan Lembaga Yang Menjalankan Fungsi Peradilan Menurut Undang-Undang Pemilu,” *Binamulia Hukum* 12, no. 1 (July 11, 2023): 89–98, <https://doi.org/10.37893/jbh.v12i1.347>.

<sup>29</sup> Triya Anggraini et al., “Peran Bawaslu dalam Mencegah Politik Uang Pada Pemilu 2024 di Kota Medan,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Multidisipliner* 6, no. 12 (December 31, 2023), <https://edu.ojs.co.id/index.php/jpm/article/view/71>.

<sup>30</sup> Zahratul’ain Taufik et al., “An Examination of Factors Influencing Law Enforcement in Cases of Electoral Offenses During the 2020 Regional Head Elections in Northern Lombok Regency,” *Jurnal IUS Kajian Hukum Dan Keadilan* 12, no. 1 (April 30, 2024): 196–207, <https://doi.org/10.29303/ius.v12i1.1297>; Dicky Eko Prasetyo, Muh Ali Masnun, and Noviyanti



with strict provisions. Articles 11(2) and 12(1)–(2) require candidates to establish a dedicated Campaign Fund Account (Rekening Khusus Dana Kampanye, RKDK), distinct from their accounts.<sup>31</sup> This provision reinforces transparency and accountability—principles aligned with Islamic concepts of *amānah* (trust) and *hisāb* (accountability). The requirement that all campaign funds be deposited and recorded through the RKDK is designed to prevent illicit or undocumented financial practices, according to the *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, particularly the protection of wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) and the preservation of a just social-political order (*ḥifẓ al-dīn* and *ḥifẓ al-‘aql*).

Concurrently, Perbawaslu No. 13 of 2017 categorises the provision of money or material goods to influence voters, particularly when conducted in a structured, systematic, and massive (TSM) manner, as an administrative violation.<sup>32</sup> The regulatory framework includes clear mechanisms for proof, as reflected in Table 3, which identifies key indicators of electoral intent behind charitable acts: (a) *Timing*: Donations occur during the official campaign period (evidence: time-stamped documentation, monitoring reports); (b) *Location*: Targeted at voter-dense areas (evidence: GPS data, field reports); (c) *Recipient Targeting*: Directed at strategic voting blocs (evidence: beneficiary lists, community testimony); (d) *Political Attributes*: Including party logos or symbols (evidence: banners, clothing, paraphernalia); (e) *Track Record*: No prior history of such donations (evidence: community archives); (f) *Source of Funds*: Legality or legitimacy is questionable (evidence: bank statements, campaign audits); (g) *Witness Testimony*: Observers report influence attempts (evidence: recipient accounts, monitoring statements); (h) *Public Declarations*: Accompanied by appeals to vote for a candidate (evidence: speeches, social media posts).

These indicators reflect a jurisprudential methodology similar to *istinbāt* in Islamic law, whereby legal rulings are derived through the assessment of concrete actions and underlying intentions. In Islam, *niyyah* (intention) is a fundamental element in determining the ethical quality of an act. Thus, an ostensibly pious deed, such as charitable giving, may be deemed morally reprehensible if driven by corrupt political motives. The intention is tainted with worldly ambition, contradicting the essence of *ikhhlās*. In electoral contexts, empirical studies have shown that voters often interpret material aid as transactional support, particularly when it is delivered near election time.<sup>33</sup> Article 187A of Law No. 10 of 2016 concerning Elections stipulates that any individual who intentionally offers or promises money or material goods to

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Noviyanti, “Post-Election Reconciliation in 2024 as a Constitutional Convention in Indonesia: A Progressive Legal Culture Perspective,” *Jambura Law Review* 7, no. 1 (January 31, 2025): 176–96, <https://doi.org/10.33756/jlr.v7i1.26999>; Maman Budiman, “Model Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Korupsi Pada Pemilu / Pemilukada,” *LITIGASI* 21, no. 2 (December 22, 2020): 199–219, <https://doi.org/10.23969/litigasi.v21i2.3164>.

<sup>31</sup> Fadia Muflaha and Dejahave Al Jannah, “Sinkronisasi KPU Dan Bawaslu Dalam Penanganan Politik Uang Untuk Mewujudkan Pemilu Yang Demokratis Di Indonesia | JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan,” accessed June 26, 2025, <https://jiip.stkipyapisdampu.ac.id/jiip/index.php/JIIP/article/view/3765>.

<sup>32</sup> Risca Vanesa Risca and Hasuri, “Visory Body in Tackling Money Politics in the 2024 Serang District Regional Head Election,” *Ajudikasi: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 8, no. 2 (2024): 259–69, <https://doi.org/10.30656/ajudikasi.v8i2.10253>.

<sup>33</sup> Sergiu Gherghina and Paul Tap, “Selling Their Vote Expensively: The Effects of Information, Apathy and Age,” *Party Politics*, December 27, 2024, 13540688241311866, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13540688241311866>.



influence voters shall be subject to criminal penalties, including imprisonment of between 36 and 72 months and fines ranging from IDR 200 million to IDR 1 billion. This reflects the application of Islamic legal maxims, such as *dar' al-mafāsīd* (prevention of harm), which underpin many principles in Islamic governance.

Bawaslu has also explicitly warned against the politicisation of charity during Ramadan, asserting that acts of benevolence must not be co-opted for electoral gain. Commissioner Lolly Suhenty emphasised that charitable efforts must remain separate from campaign activities to avoid misleading the public—an articulation of the Islamic legal maxim *al-umūr bi maqāṣidihā* (matters are judged by their objectives). Hence, the legal constructions found in the PKPU and Perbawaslu are not merely formal-legal instruments but manifestations of the *metamorphosis of Islamic law* within the framework of modern Indonesian electoral governance. Values such as honesty, justice, trust, and sincerity have been transformed into enforceable standards aimed at preserving democratic integrity and ensuring free and fair elections.

### Principles of Evidence in Islamic Law for Assessing the Legitimacy of Charitable Donations in the Context of Elections

In the context of elections, the act of giving assets—whether in the form of money, goods, or services—by political candidates to members of the public is often claimed to constitute *ṣadaqah* (charitable donation). However, it is essential to distinguish, through legal means, between donations that are valid according to *sharī'ah* and covert practices of vote-buying. This calls for a thorough examination of evidentiary principles in Islamic law that can be applied to assess the legitimacy of such donations. The fundamental aim of evidence in Islamic law is to uphold *al-'adl* (justice) and *al-ḥaqq* (truth) through the presentation of *bayyīnāt* (proof) and *shahādah* (witness testimony) that objectively illuminate legal reality. In cases involving campaign *ṣadaqah*, this process is not confined to analysing the external act of giving; rather, it extends to discerning *qaṣd* (the intention) behind it. The assessment of intent is especially critical, as it determines whether the act constitutes genuine worship or manipulative political tendencies.

Islamic jurisprudence offers several tools and methodologies for establishing evidence. Contextual indicators (*qarīnah*) such as the timing of the donation (e.g. limited to the campaign period), the frequency of giving, its relationship to candidacy, and the accompanying statements or declarations may all serve as indications of political motivation. *Iqrār* (a direct confession), whether explicit or implicit, that the donation was made in expectation of electoral support can serve as strong evidence. Similarly, documentary or testimonial evidence (*bayyīnah*)—including audio-visual recordings, witness testimonies, or campaign-related documentation that connects the donation with efforts to solicit votes—can substantiate such claims. Moreover, Islamic legal reasoning permits the use of principles such as *istiṣhāb* (presumption of continuity) and *sadd al-dharī'ah* (blocking the means to harm), particularly where there is uncertainty that could compromise justice. In such instances, caution must be exercised to prevent political corruption and manipulation.

The challenge of proving intention, due to its inherently internal and subjective nature, requires a nuanced approach to Islamic law. Rather than relying solely on verbal declarations, Islamic evidentiary procedures allow for the use of strong contextual indicators (*qarā'in*) that lead to a high degree of probable certainty



(*ghalabat al-zann*). These indirect but persuasive forms of evidence are admissible as substitutes for direct proof when intent cannot be explicitly demonstrated. When compelling evidence suggests that the *sadaqah* is politically motivated, several legal consequences follow. Such a donation is deemed invalid according to Islamic law, as it undermines the sincerity required in acts of worship. Furthermore, it may be classified as an act of deception involving *riyā'* (ostentation) or bad faith (*sū' al-zann*) and is effectively tantamount to vote-buying (*siyāsah māliyah*)—a practice categorically prohibited for its potential to distort justice and fairness in electoral processes.

**Table 4.** Indicators for Assessing Intent Behind Charitable Donations or Vote-Buying in Islamic Law

Aspect	<i>Sadaqah</i> (worship)	Vote-Buying (Manipulative)	Type of Evidence in Islamic Law
<i>Qaṣd</i> (intention)	Given solely to seek the pleasure of Allah	Intended to secure votes or political support	<i>Iqrār</i> , <i>Qarīnah</i> , <i>Shahādah</i>
<i>Istiḳāmah</i> (consistency)	Given regularly outside of campaign periods	Only active during election campaigns	<i>Qarīnah</i> (timing, frequency)
Timing Context	Unrelated to election momentum	Given shortly before or during campaign	<i>Qarīnah</i> (chronological cues)
Source of Funds	From lawful personal wealth, not campaign funds	Often from sponsors, campaign budgets, or undisclosed	<i>Iqrār</i> , Bayyinah (financial documents)
Statements Made	No mention of expecting reward	Associated with promises or requests for votes	Recordings, <i>Shahādah</i>
Form of Giving	General and equitable to those in need	Selective, targeting potential voters	<i>Qarīnah</i> + <i>Shahādah</i>
Public Reaction	Recipients do not feel coerced or enticed	Recipients feel encouraged to vote for the candidate	<i>Shahādah</i> , community testimony

This Table can be employed to support legal arguments that intention and context in charitable giving can be assessed objectively through *qarīnah* and other evidentiary tools in Islamic law.

### Contextual Examination of Political Charitable Giving in the 2024 General and Regional Elections

The socio-political dynamics of Indonesia during the 2024 General and Regional Elections reveal that the boundary between *sadaqah* (charitable giving) and

vote-buying is not merely an abstract concern.<sup>34</sup> Several contemporary incidents suggest that philanthropic acts may be motivated by electoral considerations, thereby underscoring the importance of applying the principle of *qarīnah* (contextual indicator) and the evidentiary system of Islamic law to assess the legitimacy of such actions. The involvement of prominent political figures in ostensibly pious acts has drawn considerable public attention. For instance, figures such as Gus Miftah, Zulkifli Hasan, and Gibran Rakabuming Raka were scrutinised for their charitable activities in the lead-up to the elections.<sup>35</sup> Gus Miftah was recorded distributing money in Pamekasan while wearing a t-shirt featuring the presidential and vice-presidential candidates Prabowo and Gibran. Although claimed to be a personal act of charity, several *qarā'in*—such as the timing during the campaign period, the location within an electoral district, the presence of political insignia, and public documentation—strongly suggest an electoral motive. From the standpoint of Islamic law, such a donation may fall within the realm of *riyā'* (ostentation) or even *risywah* (bribery), due to indications of a concealed worldly intent.<sup>36</sup>

A similar case arose when Zulkifli Hasan handed out Rp50,000 in cash to members of the public.<sup>37</sup> While this was presented as a habitual charitable act, it took place in a public space during the campaign period. When assessed using fiqh indicators such as *istiqāmah* (consistency), source of funds, and absence of political symbols, the act fails to meet the criteria of sincere charitable giving, particularly given the lack of a consistent history of similar acts before or after the campaign. Likewise, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, vice-presidential candidate number two, was criticised for distributing milk during a car-free day event. While no explicit appeal for votes was made, the timing of the event and his official candidacy serve as strong *qarā'in* pointing to a political agenda. When evaluated through the lenses of *ikhhlās* (sincerity), *istiqāmah*, and funding sources, such actions are questionable in terms of their legitimacy as acts of genuine worship. This is in line with the Islamic legal principle that permits the use of *qarīnah*, *shahādah* (testimony), and *bayyinah* (evidence) as tools for establishing intent, particularly when internal motives cannot be proven directly. It is in this context that Islamic legal inquiry into intention and evidentiary mechanisms becomes particularly pertinent for evaluating the legitimacy of these actions.

At the regional level, the strategy of politicised charitable giving has often been formalised by campaign teams rather than by individual figures. In the West Java regional election, for example, the campaign team of Ahmad Syaikh and Ilham Habibie in Bogor District implemented a weekly Friday mass-charity programme (*ṣadaqah berjama'ah*) as a means of seeking victory. The campaign chairman explicitly

<sup>34</sup> Chaudhry Ghafran and Sofia Yasmin, "Ethical Governance: Insight from the Islamic Perspective and an Empirical Enquiry," *Journal of Business Ethics* 167, no. 3 (December 1, 2020): 513–33, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-04170-3>.

<sup>35</sup> Ken Norton Hutasoit et al., "Pemberitaan Kasus Korupsi Bansos Kemensos RI," *NIVEDANA: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Bahasa* 4, no. 2 (December 29, 2023): 314–22, <https://doi.org/10.53565/nivedana.v4i2.947>.

<sup>36</sup> Hilman Latief, "The Politics of Benevolence: Political Patronage of Party-Based Charitable Organizations in Contemporary Indonesian Islam," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 51, no. 2 (December 19, 2013): 337–63, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2013.512.337-363>.

<sup>37</sup> Jaka Budi Santosa, "Sedekah atau Risywah," May 1, 2024, [https://mediaindonesia.com/podiums/detail\\_podiums/2949-sedekah-atau-risywah](https://mediaindonesia.com/podiums/detail_podiums/2949-sedekah-atau-risywah).



stated that this initiative was aimed at electoral success.<sup>38</sup> From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, the declaration of a worldly objective becomes a primary *qarīnah* that undermines the sincerity of the charitable act. According to the legal maxim *al-umūr bi-maqāṣidihā* (matters are judged by their objectives), the legitimacy of a deed is determined by its intention. Hence, if charitable giving is intended for political gain, its status as an act of worship is nullified.

Despite claims that the programme was purely religious and philanthropic in nature, an analysis based on Islamic jurisprudence reveals several indicators that cast doubt on the sincerity of its intent: a) Timing of Implementation: The proximity of the charitable acts to the campaign period raises suspicion of political motivation; b) Beneficiaries: Targeting specific voter bases for aid distribution implies an underlying political strategy; and c) Publicity: Extensive dissemination through social media and mass media suggests efforts at political image-building. Electoral oversight bodies have frequently struggled to take action in such cases due to the absence of explicit vote solicitation or open declarations. These instances illustrate the crucial role of external evidence and social context in uncovering hidden political motives behind seemingly pious acts. Consequently, such Friday group charity practices, when orchestrated by campaign teams, cannot be categorised as *shar'ī* charity but instead bear the hallmarks of concealed vote-buying. Even in the absence of direct calls for electoral support, the presence of strong *qarā'in* serves as external evidence indicating hidden political intent. It is, therefore, imperative for electoral authorities and the wider public to adopt a more critical stance in assessing social activities carried out by candidates or campaign teams during election periods. The Islamic legal approach, with its emphasis on intention and contextual indicators, offers a valuable tool for distinguishing between sincere acts of worship and the instrumentalisation of charity for political ends.

Further empirical evidence of politicised charitable giving can be found in cases where unsuccessful legislative candidates attempted to reclaim donations following their electoral defeat. Several media outlets reported instances of candidates seeking to retrieve aid that had been previously distributed. In Banyuwangi, one candidate demanded the return of paving stones donated for road repairs.<sup>39</sup> In Gorontalo, another losing candidate allegedly requested repayment of Rp75 million from local residents.<sup>40</sup> In Lombok Tengah and Banjar, cement and generators donated to mosques were likewise reclaimed.<sup>41</sup> These actions provoked public criticism, being perceived as transactional and insincere, thus reinforcing the notion that the

<sup>38</sup> Abdul Mugni, "Strategi Kampanye Berbeda: Jalur Sedekah Tim Pemenangan Cagub Jabar Nomor 3 di Kabupaten Bogor," *Pintasan Media* (blog), November 22, 2024, <https://pintasan.co/strategi-kampanye-berbeda-jalur-sedekah-tim-pemenangan-cagub-jabar-nomor-3-di-kabupaten-bogor/>.

<sup>39</sup> Endah Saari, "Heboh, Caleg di Banyuwangi Tarik Kembali Sumbangan Paving, Diduga Karena Kalah Pemilu 2024," *linggaupos.co.id*, February 19, 2024, <https://linggaupos.disway.id/read/659359/heboh-caleg-di-banyuwangi-tarik-kembali-sumbangan-paving-diduga-karena-kalah-pemilu-2024>.

<sup>40</sup> Apris Nawu, "Bawaslu Gorontalo Usut Oknum Caleg Diduga Minta Balik Rp 75 Juta ke Warga," *detiknews*, February 20, 2024, <https://news.detik.com/pemilu/d-7203383/bawaslu-gorontalo-usut-oknum-caleg-diduga-minta-balik-rp-75-juta-ke-warga>.

<sup>41</sup> Syakirun Niam and Dani Prabowo, "Caleg Gagal Tarik Bantuan, KPK: Memang Transaksional, Tidak Ikhlas," *KOMPAS.com*, March 12, 2024, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2024/03/12/16425891/caleg-gagal-tarik-bantuan-kpk-memang-transaksional-tidak-ikhlas>.



donations were motivated by political self-interest. In Islamic law, the retraction of *sadaqah* contradicts the principle of sincerity and is strongly condemned. These align with comparative findings on vote-buying motivations in Latin America<sup>42</sup> and Southeast Asia,<sup>43</sup> a where small cash incentives are systematically exchanged for votes without a verbalised contract.<sup>44</sup>

During Indonesia's 2024 General Election, multiple incidents of alleged vote buying, commonly referred to as "money politics", were reported across various regions, implicating both legislative and presidential candidates. In Malang, East Java, the Bawaslu uncovered a suspected attempt to influence voters through cash handouts, supported by a viral TikTok video showing a Rp50,000 envelope at a polling station alongside a rice scoop bearing images of a presidential candidate pair.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, in Talaud, North Sulawesi, a man identified as SM was caught red-handed during the election's cooling-off period, distributing 42 envelopes, each containing Rp300,000. The North Sulawesi Police Chief confirmed SM's actions constituted electoral bribery, leading to charges under Article 523 of the Election Law.<sup>46</sup>

In Batam, Riau Islands, the Gakkumdu task force secured cash allegedly linked to Ria Saptarika, a DPD RI candidate, and A. Zhafir, a local DPRD candidate. Although the case was initially pursued, Bawaslu Riau Islands later dropped it for lack of legal grounds.<sup>47</sup> In Biak Numfor, Papua, the local Bawaslu forwarded similar allegations involving a legislative candidate to Gakkumdu for legal processing, with ongoing investigations by police and prosecutors.<sup>48</sup> In Makassar, South Sulawesi, Syarifuddin Daeng Punna, a DPR RI candidate from the Democratic Party, was named a suspect after distributing money to residents at Losari Beach during the campaign. His case, first handled by Gakkumdu, was transferred to the police, reinforcing the link between the cash disbursement and campaign activities.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Jennis Benewaa Gyasi and Leonard Atsu Torsu, "Implications of Vote-Selling on Ghana's Democracy: Evidence from Bantama Constituency," *Journal of Political Science and International Relationship* 1, no. 1 (June 15, 2024): 27–34, <https://doi.org/10.54536/jpsir.v1i1.2850>.

<sup>43</sup> Anand Murugesan, "Electoral Clientelism and Vote Buying," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1334>.

<sup>44</sup> Sergio J. Ascencio and Han Il Chang, "Does Vote Buying Undermine Confidence in Ballot Secrecy? Theory and Experimental Evidence," *Political Science Research and Methods*, September 30, 2024, 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2024.54>.

<sup>45</sup> Ashaq Lupito, "Bawaslu Kabupaten Malang Dalami Dugaan Politik Uang untuk Coblos Salah Satu Paslon Pilpres," *Jatim TIMES*, February 13, 2024, <https://jatimtimes.com/baca/305871/20240212/180200/bawaslu-kabupaten-malang-dalami-dugaan-politik-uang-untuk-coblos-salah-satu-paslon-pilpres>.

<sup>46</sup> Humas Kepolisian Daerah Sulawesi Utara, "Patroli Tim Gakkumdu Talaud Tangkap Tangan Pelaku Money Politik," *Tribrata News Polda Sulawesi Utara* (blog), February 14, 2024, <https://tribrataneews.sulut.polri.go.id/patroli-tim-gakkumdu-talaud-tangkap-tangan-pelaku-money-politik/>.

<sup>47</sup> Alamudin Hamapu, "Polisi Sebut Gakkumdu Amankan Bukti Dugaan Money Politics Caleg di Batam," *detiksumut*, January 23, 2024, <https://www.detik.com/sumut/berita/d-7156591/polisi-sebut-gakkumdu-amankan-bukti-dugaan-money-politics-caleg-di-batam>.

<sup>48</sup> Muhsidin, "Bawaslu Limpahkan Kasus Politik Uang Caleg Parpol Pemilu Ke Gakkumdu," *Antara News Papua*, April 17, 2024, <https://papua.antaranews.com/berita/719943/bawaslu-limpahkan-kasus-politik-uang-caleg-parpol-pemilu-ke-gakkumdu>.

<sup>49</sup> Ahmad Nurfajri Syahidallah, "Caleg Demokrat Sadap Bagi-bagi Uang di Losari Makassar Jadi Tersangka," *detiksulsel*, October 3, 2024, <https://www.detik.com/sulsel/makassar/d-7234541/caleg-demokrat-sadap-bagi-bagi-uang-di-losari-makassar-jadi-tersangka>.



Accordingly, alongside the reinforcement of positive legal systems, Islamic jurisprudence provides a crucial alternative for evaluating political charitable giving. A sound understanding of *niyyah* (intention), *ikhhlās* (sincerity), and *qarīnah* (objective contextual indicators) is essential for safeguarding the integrity of democratic processes and the sanctity of religious deeds from political manipulation. There is a pressing need to cultivate a public awareness capable of discerning between genuine religious devotion and strategic performances aimed at political influence. Strengthening the collective ability to interpret *qaṣd* (implied intention) and recognise *qarā'in* (contextual indicators), such as symbolic gestures or calculated timing, can serve as a societal safeguard against the instrumentalisation of religious acts for personal or political gain.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that *ṣadaqah* (contextual indicators) conducted in the context of electoral campaigns risks deviating from its original religious purpose and falling into the category of political *risywah* (bribery). The essence of Islamic charity, which is rooted in *ikhhlās* (sincerity) and *niyyah* (pure intention), is violated when donations are motivated by personal ambition, political image-building, or the desire to influence voter behaviour. The presence of *riyā'* (ostentation), *sū' al-qaṣd* (malicious intent), and the manipulation of charitable acts as campaign tools undermines both the ethical and spiritual integrity of such giving. This research contributes to Islamic legal scholarship by offering a framework of *qarīnah*-based indicators—such as timing, consistency, publicity, source of funds, and political affiliation—to distinguish sincere *ṣadaqah* from politically instrumentalised charity. In the absence of a verbal confession, these indicators serve as legal proxies to assess hidden electoral motives. This approach aligns with Islamic legal maxims such as *al-umūr bi-maqāṣidihā* (actions are judged by their objectives) and supports the integration of fiqh-based reasoning into contemporary electoral ethics. The findings affirm the need for regulatory reforms that explicitly address the phenomenon of political charity and recommend that electoral monitoring bodies adopt Islamic evidentiary principles in evaluating suspected cases of vote-buying. Moreover, this study encourages public education initiatives that enhance religious and civic literacy so that voters are equipped to recognise manipulative acts disguised as pious behaviour. Future research may extend this analysis by comparing Islamic evidentiary tools with those in secular legal systems or by developing standardised instruments, such as an Islamic ethical audit model, for evaluating political donations. Such work would help preserve the sanctity of worship and strengthen democratic accountability in Muslim-majority societies.

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