



Twenty-Eight-Day Fasting, Lunar Visibility, and Communal Eid Observance in Islamic Jurisprudence

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Abstract:

The determination of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr becomes legally complex when Muslims travel between countries that begin or end the month on different dates. This study examines the jurisprudential problem of a traveler who completes only twenty-eight days of fasting before joining Eid in a destination country, asking whether such fasting constitutes a complete Ramadan and whether *qada'* is required. Using a qualitative normative-juridical method, it analyses Qur'anic and prophetic foundations on fasting, crescent sighting, and lunar-month completion, together with fiqh doctrines such as *ru'yat al-hilal*, *ikhtilaf al-matāli'*, communal authority, traveler concessions, and *qada'*. Comparative fiqh reasoning and hypothetical travel cases evaluate twenty-eight-day and thirty-one-day scenarios. The findings show that Islamic law recognises Ramadan as a lunar month of twenty-nine or thirty days; therefore, twenty-eight fasts do not constitute a complete Ramadan. A traveler present where Eid has been officially or communally declared should join the host community to preserve public religious unity, yet this does not remove the individual obligation to complete the missing day through *qada'*. The study positions *qada'* as the mechanism mediating communal conformity and individual ritual completeness, contributing to legal discourse on transnational mobility, lunar visibility, and public religious authority within a living-law and legal-pluralism framework relevant to Indonesia.

Keywords: Ramadan fasting; *qada'*; Islamic jurisprudence; lunar visibility; *ikhtilaf al-matāli'*; Eid al-Fitr; cross-border mobility

Abstrak :

Penentuan Ramadan dan Idulfitri menjadi kompleks secara hukum ketika seorang Muslim melakukan perjalanan antarnegara yang memulai atau mengakhiri bulan pada tanggal berbeda. Studi ini mengkaji persoalan yurisprudensi tentang musafir yang hanya menyelesaikan dua puluh delapan hari puasa sebelum berhari raya di negara tujuan, yakni apakah puasa tersebut menggenapi Ramadan dan apakah *qada'* diwajibkan. Dengan metode normatif-yuridis kualitatif, kajian ini menganalisis dasar Al-Qur'an dan hadis tentang puasa, rukyat hilal, dan penyempurnaan bulan kamariah, serta doktrin fikih seperti *ru'yat al-hilal*, *ikhtilaf al-matāli'*, otoritas komunal, rukhsah musafir, dan *qada'*. Penalaran fikih komparatif dan kasus hipotetis digunakan untuk mengevaluasi skenario dua puluh delapan dan tiga puluh satu hari. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa hukum Islam mengakui Ramadan sebagai bulan kamariah berdurasi dua puluh sembilan atau tiga puluh hari, sehingga dua puluh delapan hari puasa tidak menggenapkan Ramadan. Musafir yang berada di negara tempat Idulfitri telah ditetapkan secara resmi atau komunal sebaiknya mengikuti komunitas setempat demi menjaga persatuan keagamaan publik, tetapi hal itu tidak menggugurkan kewajiban individu menyempurnakan satu hari yang kurang melalui *qada'*. Studi ini menempatkan *qada'* sebagai mekanisme yang menjembatani konformitas komunal dan kelengkapan ibadah individual, serta berkontribusi pada diskursus hukum tentang mobilitas transnasional dalam kerangka hukum yang hidup (*living law*) dan pluralisme hukum di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Puasa Ramadan; *qada'*; yurisprudensi Islam; visibilitas hilal; *ikhtilaf al-matāli'*; Idulfitri; mobilitas lintas negara

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INTRODUCTION

The determination of the beginning and end of Ramadan remains one of the most significant intersections between Islamic ritual law, astronomical observation, public religious authority, and communal practice. In Islamic jurisprudence, the obligation to fast Ramadan and to end the fast with Eid al-Fiṭr is closely tied to the appearance of the lunar crescent, or *hilāl*, after sunset. Where the crescent cannot be sighted, the established legal alternative is the completion of thirty days of the preceding lunar month. This doctrinal structure is grounded in the Qur'anic obligation of fasting and in prophetic reports instructing Muslims to fast and break the fast upon sighting the crescent, while completing thirty days when visibility is obstructed (Nurkhanif et al., 2022). Classical *fiqh* therefore treats Ramadan not merely as a devotional period but as a legally determined lunar month whose beginning and ending require authoritative confirmation.

Recent scholarship demonstrates that this classical framework continues to shape contemporary Muslim practice, although its application has become increasingly complex. Studies on Ramadan determination in Indonesia, Southeast Asia, and broader Muslim contexts show that *rukyat al-hilāl*, testimony, formal confirmation, and astronomical calculation are often combined within institutional decision-making processes (Nurkhanif et al., 2022; Marwadi, 2021). The debate is no longer limited to whether the crescent is visible, but also includes who has authority to declare visibility, whether local or global sighting should be followed, and how modern astronomical criteria such as *imkān al-ru'yah* should inform legal decisions (Yaqin, 2023; Loucif et al., 2024). These debates reveal that Ramadan timing is both a juristic and institutional matter, especially in modern nation-states where religious declarations affect worship, public holidays, travel, education, and social cohesion.

The central problem addressed in this study arises from the interaction between lunar-calendar diversity and contemporary cross-border mobility. Classical jurisprudence often presumes that Muslims live within a relatively stable legal and ritual environment, where the fasting calendar is shared by a local community under a recognizable religious authority. Modern travel challenges this assumption. A Muslim may begin Ramadan in one country, travel during the month, and arrive in another country that began Ramadan on a different date. This can result in unusual legal outcomes: a traveler may complete only twenty-eight fasts before the host country celebrates Eid al-Fiṭr, or may be expected to fast beyond thirty days because the destination country has not yet declared Eid. Such cases raise difficult questions concerning legal obligation, communal conformity, and individual accountability.

The general solution proposed in contemporary discussions is not to reduce the issue to a purely astronomical dispute, but to treat it as a juristic problem involving competing principles. On one side, Islamic law gives weight to local communal authority and public religious order. In many Muslim-majority contexts, government-led or institutionally recognized *isbat* procedures determine the beginning of Ramadan and Eid by evaluating *rukyat* reports, astronomical data, and accepted criteria (Ridwan & Zain, 2021; Maskufa et al., 2022; Ridwan et al., 2023). On the other side, fasting remains an individual obligation whose legal completeness cannot be ignored. A traveler who has fasted fewer than the legally recognized minimum number of days cannot simply treat an incomplete personal Ramadan as complete. The problem, therefore, requires a legal framework that preserves communal unity without erasing individual ritual responsibility.

Previous literature offers several pathways for addressing this tension. One approach emphasizes local *rukyat* and local religious authority. According to this orientation, Muslims should follow the crescent determination of the region in which they are located, because public worship such as Ramadan and Eid depends on collective practice rather than private calculation. This view is reflected in discussions of local *mathla'* and in institutional practices that validate crescent testimony through recognized authorities (Koto et al., 2024; Nisa' & Ulinnuha, 2021; Marwadi et al., 2023). It is also supported by studies showing that local determinations preserve doctrinal

continuity, accommodate geographical differences in visibility, and maintain the legitimacy of religious institutions (Nurkhanif et al., 2022; Ridwan et al., 2023).

A second approach seeks greater harmonization through regional or global criteria. Scholars advocating global or coordinated calendars argue that divergent Ramadan and Eid dates produce social, administrative, and spiritual difficulties for transnational Muslim communities. The MABIMS criteria, including minimum hilāl height and elongation thresholds, represent a prominent regional attempt to integrate rukyat and hisab in order to reduce disagreement while maintaining a connection to crescent visibility (Maskufa et al., 2022; Marwadi, 2021). Other studies explore the use of astronomical calculation, imkān al-ru'yah, and even machine-learning-based prediction to support more consistent lunar-calendar decisions (Loucif et al., 2024). These approaches do not necessarily replace fiqh-based authority; rather, they seek to strengthen decision-making by combining religious norms, scientific evidence, and public welfare.

The literature most closely related to the present study concerns conflicts between personal fasting counts and communal Eid declarations. Existing scholarship has examined the classical debate on ikhtilāf al-maṭāli‘, the role of public authority in isbat, the integration of rukyat and hisab, and the importance of maslahah in reducing social conflict (Rofuiddin & Izzuddin, 2022). It has also shown that cross-border mobility, migration, and diaspora life expose Muslims to multiple lunar jurisdictions, creating practical uncertainty about which calendar should govern worship (Yaqin, 2023; Mufid & Djamaluddin, 2023). However, insufficient attention has been given to the specific jurisprudential consequence of a twenty-eight-day Ramadan. The literature often discusses calendar harmonization and authority, but it rarely isolates the legal distinction between the validity of joining the host community in Eid and the incompleteness of an individual's fasting obligation.

This study aims to address that gap by examining the jurisprudence of twenty-eight-day fasting caused by cross-border mobility. It argues that a twenty-eight-day Ramadan cannot be treated as a legally complete Ramadan, because the lunar month in Islamic law is normally structured as twenty-nine or thirty days. At the same time, a traveler who is physically present in a country where Eid has been officially or communally declared should observe Eid with the local Muslim community in order to preserve public religious unity and avoid visible contradiction. The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to harmonize three elements that are often treated separately: lunar visibility, communal authority, and the individual obligation of qaḍā'. The study is limited to the normative-juridical analysis of Ramadan and Eid al-Fiṭr in cases of cross-border mobility, with particular attention to the traveler who completes only twenty-eight fasts before the host community celebrates Eid. It proposes that qaḍā' functions as the legal mechanism that reconciles communal participation with personal ritual completeness.

Framed within legal studies, this problem is not merely devotional but jurisprudential. It concerns how public legal authority, the living law of Muslim communities, and legal pluralism interact when more than one legitimate calendar governs the same individual. In the Indonesian context, the determination of Ramadan and Shawwal is a matter of public legal order mediated through the government's sidang isbat and the fatwas of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), which makes the traveler's dilemma directly relevant to the sociology of law, legal philosophy, and the adjudication of religious-legal authority. Reading the twenty-eight-day case through this lens situates the study within contemporary debates on how state and communal legal institutions accommodate transnational mobility.

METHOD

Research Design: Qualitative Normative-Juridical Method

This study adopts a qualitative normative-juridical method to examine the legal consequences of twenty-eight-day fasting caused by cross-border mobility during Ramadan. The inquiry is doctrinal rather than empirical, because the principal object of analysis is not the measurable behavior of a particular Muslim population, but the legal reasoning through which

Islamic law regulates fasting, lunar visibility, Eid observance, and the obligation of *qaḍā'*. Normative-juridical methodology is suitable for this study because it enables a systematic examination of Qur'anic injunctions, prophetic traditions, juristic doctrines, and legal principles within the framework of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. Contemporary scholarship on Islamic ritual law shows that this method is frequently used to address modern questions of Ramadan determination, moon sighting, public authority, and the integration of *falak* or astronomical knowledge into legal decision-making (Ḥasan, 2023; Yaqin, 2023; Majid et al., 2023; Koto et al., 2024). In this study, the method is directed toward a specific legal problem: whether a traveler who joins Eid al-Fiṭr in a destination country after fasting only twenty-eight days has completed Ramadan, or whether the deficiency must be remedied through *qaḍā'*.

The research design is constructed around four interrelated analytical approaches: textual analysis, doctrinal analysis, comparative *fiqh* reasoning, and hypothetical case analysis. These approaches are not treated as separate methods with unrelated objectives, but as sequential layers of legal inquiry. Textual analysis establishes the normative basis of Ramadan and Eid determination. Doctrinal analysis clarifies the relevant *fiqh* categories and their legal consequences. Comparative *fiqh* reasoning evaluates different juristic orientations toward local authority, lunar visibility, and individual fasting completion. Hypothetical case analysis then applies these principles to travel-induced scenarios in which personal fasting counts diverge from communal Eid declarations. The overall methodological logic is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Methodological Framework of the Study

Analytical approach	Main object of analysis	Function in the study
Textual analysis	Qur'anic and prophetic foundations of fasting, crescent sighting, and month completion	Establishes the normative basis for Ramadan and Eid determination
Doctrinal analysis	Ru'yat al-hilāl, ikhtilāf al-maṭālī', <i>qaḍā'</i> , rukhsah, and communal authority	Clarifies the legal concepts governing the traveler's obligation
Comparative <i>fiqh</i> reasoning	Competing juristic orientations on local conformity and individual completion	Weighs alternative legal positions and their implications
Hypothetical case analysis	Twenty-eight-day and thirty-one-day travel scenarios	Tests the practical application of legal principles

Textual Analysis of Foundational Islamic Sources

The first methodological component is textual analysis of foundational Islamic sources related to Ramadan. The study examines the Qur'anic obligation of fasting and the prophetic traditions that connect the beginning and end of Ramadan to the sighting of the *hilāl* or to the completion of thirty days when sighting is not possible. The relevant legal maxim is reflected in the well-known prophetic instruction to fast upon sighting the crescent and to end the fast upon sighting it, with completion of thirty days when visibility is obstructed. Contemporary literature identifies this textual framework as the normative anchor of Ramadan timing and Eid determination (Nurkhanif et al., 2022; Ḥasan, 2023; Majid et al., 2023). The study therefore begins from the premise that Ramadan is not an indeterminate devotional period, but a legally structured lunar month whose minimum and maximum limits are embedded in the textual tradition.

The textual analysis also considers how classical and contemporary jurists interpret the evidentiary value of crescent sighting. The literature indicates that *rukyat al-hilāl* is not merely a

visual act, but a legally mediated procedure involving testimony, credibility, formal validation, and communal acceptance (Hasan, 2023; Koto et al., 2024; Ridwan et al., 2023; Marwadi et al., 2023). This point is important for the present study because a traveler's legal situation is shaped not only by personal observation, but also by public declarations issued by recognized religious or state authorities. The textual method therefore does not isolate scriptural statements from legal institutions; rather, it reads them through the juristic procedures that determine how sighting is confirmed and translated into public ritual time.

Doctrinal Analysis of Fiqh Concepts

The second methodological component is doctrinal analysis of key fiqh concepts that structure the legal problem. The study examines ru'yat al-hilāl as the basis for determining the start and end of Ramadan, ikhtilāf al-maṭālī' as the doctrine explaining differences in lunar visibility across regions, qaḍā' as the mechanism for making up deficient obligations, rukhsah as the concession relevant to travelers, and communal authority as the legal basis for public Ramadan and Eid declarations. These concepts are analyzed to determine how Islamic law responds when a traveler's personal fasting count differs from the fasting calendar of the host community.

This doctrinal analysis is informed by contemporary scholarship showing that Islamic legal determinations of Ramadan often involve the interaction of textual authority, local sighting, astronomical calculation, and public welfare. Studies of Indonesian and Southeast Asian practices, for example, demonstrate that religious authorities frequently combine rukyat reports, hisab, imkān al-ru'yah criteria, and isbat procedures in order to regulate public worship and reduce social discord (Nurkhanif et al., 2022; Marwadi, 2021; Maskufa et al., 2022). The doctrinal analysis therefore treats communal authority as a legally relevant factor, especially because Eid al-Fiṭr is a public ritual that should not be reduced to private calculation. At the same time, the analysis preserves the individual character of fasting as a personal obligation that must meet the legal structure of Ramadan. This distinction is central to the study's argument that joining Eid with the host community does not automatically eliminate the duty to make up a missing fast.

Comparative Fiqh Reasoning

The third methodological component is comparative fiqh reasoning. The study compares two main juristic orientations. The first emphasizes adherence to the local Muslim community and the authority of the jurisdiction in which the traveler is physically present. This orientation is supported by literature that stresses the public nature of Ramadan and Eid declarations, the role of isbat, and the need to preserve communal unity in worship (Ridwan & Zain, 2021; Maskufa et al., 2022; Ridwan et al., 2023). The second orientation emphasizes the traveler's individual obligation to complete the legally required number of fasting days, since a lunar month in Islamic law is generally understood as twenty-nine or thirty days rather than twenty-eight. This orientation gives priority to the legal completeness of the obligation, even when the traveler publicly conforms to the Eid declaration of the host country.

Comparative fiqh reasoning is necessary because the problem cannot be resolved as a purely astronomical matter. Differences in Ramadan dates arise from divergent legal approaches to local and global mathla', the admissibility of sighting testimony, the use of astronomical calculation, and the authority of state or religious institutions. Contemporary scholarship shows that jurists and policymakers have proposed hybrid models that preserve local rukyat as a basis for worship while using regional or global imkān al-ru'yah criteria to improve coordination and predictability (Loucif et al., 2024; Majid et al., 2023; Maskufa et al., 2022; Marwadi, 2021). This study uses comparative reasoning to evaluate how such approaches affect the traveler's obligation, especially in cases where communal conformity and individual completion point toward different practical outcomes.

Hypothetical Case Analysis

The fourth methodological component is hypothetical case analysis. This method constructs legally plausible scenarios in order to test how the relevant doctrines operate under contemporary conditions of mobility. The central case examined in this study involves a Muslim who begins Ramadan in Country A and then travels to Country B, where Eid al-Fiṭr is declared earlier. As a result, the traveler has completed only twenty-eight fasts when the host community celebrates Eid. The case is used to examine whether the traveler should fast privately, oppose the local Eid declaration, join the community in Eid, or join Eid while later performing qaḍā'. The analysis evaluates these options through textual rules on fasting, doctrines of lunar month completion, principles of communal conformity, and the remedial function of qaḍā'.

A secondary hypothetical case considers the opposite scenario, in which the traveler may be required to fast thirty-one days because the destination country declares Eid later than the country where the traveler began Ramadan. This case clarifies the tension between following the local community and respecting the legal maximum of the lunar month. Literature on comparative fiqh and hypothetical case analysis indicates that scenario-based reasoning is useful for identifying which elements of the law are non-negotiable and which are dependent on policy, authority, or public welfare (Zufriani et al., 2023; Acar, 2021; Wahb, 2023; Pease & Hess, 2021). In this study, hypothetical analysis functions not as speculation, but as a juristic testing device. It demonstrates that cross-border mobility creates legal consequences that classical doctrines can address, provided that those doctrines are applied through a balanced framework that accounts for lunar visibility, communal authority, and individual ritual responsibility.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Legal Minimum of the Lunar Month

The first result of this study is that a twenty-eight-day Ramadan cannot be considered legally complete within the dominant framework of Islamic jurisprudence. The textual and juristic materials consistently affirm that the beginning and end of Ramadan are determined by the sighting of the hilāl or, when sighting is not possible, by completing thirty days. This rule establishes the lunar month as a legally bounded period of either twenty-nine or thirty days, not twenty-eight. The hadith formulation that Muslims should fast upon sighting the crescent, break the fast upon sighting it, and complete thirty days when the crescent is obscured provides the basic juridical structure for Ramadan and Shawwal determination (Ḥasan, 2023; Nisa' & Ulinnuha, 2021). Thus, the legal problem in a twenty-eight-day fasting case is not whether the traveler has participated in a recognized Eid declaration, but whether the personal obligation of Ramadan fasting has reached the minimum legal structure of the lunar month.

This finding is further supported by classical and contemporary discussions of rukyat, istikmāl, and imkān al-ru'yah. Classical jurists developed the distinction between direct crescent sighting and completion of the month, while contemporary scholarship explains how astronomical visibility criteria may assist but do not erase the baseline rule that Ramadan is legally structured as twenty-nine or thirty days (Majid et al., 2023; Nurkhanif et al., 2022; Royyani et al., 2022). Modern approaches that incorporate hisab, MABIMS criteria, or visibility thresholds are best understood as technical and institutional supports for determining when the month begins or ends, rather than as mechanisms for authorizing a twenty-eight-day Ramadan. For this reason, a traveler who fasts only twenty-eight days has not completed the legally required number of Ramadan fasts, even if the deficiency arises from movement between jurisdictions rather than from deliberate neglect.

The result also confirms that the legal minimum of the lunar month is not merely a matter of astronomical description but a normatively operative rule. Qur'anic references to completing the prescribed number and prophetic traditions describing the month as sometimes twenty-nine and sometimes thirty establish a legal expectation of completion. Contemporary fatwa materials,

including institutional rulings attributed to Lajnah Dā'imah and explanations by Ibn Bāz, treat a community's discovery that it fasted only twenty-eight days as evidence that one Ramadan day was missed and must be made up. The same logic applies to a traveler whose twenty-eight-day count results from cross-border calendar mismatch. The deficiency is personal and remedial, not a rejection of the host community's Eid declaration.

Communal Eid Observance and Local Conformity

The second result is that Islamic law gives substantial weight to communal conformity in Eid observance. A traveler who arrives in a country where Eid al-Fiṭr has been officially or communally declared should not publicly oppose the local Muslim community by fasting on that day. Eid is a public ritual, not a purely private devotional choice. It is marked by collective prayer, communal celebration, and the public conclusion of Ramadan within a recognized religious order. This communal dimension is reflected in the prophetic principle that fasting and breaking the fast occur with the Muslim community, a principle interpreted by al-Tirmidhī as referring to fasting and Eid with the *jama'ah* and the majority of people.

Contemporary scholarship on Ramadan and Eid governance supports this result by showing that declarations of Ramadan and Shawwal are commonly mediated through religious authorities, state institutions, *isbat* sessions, or hybrid procedures that combine *rukyat* and *hisab* (Ridwan & Zain, 2021; Loucif et al., 2024; Maskufa et al., 2022). In such settings, the traveler becomes socially and ritually situated within the host community. Publicly fasting on the day of Eid could create visible disagreement and undermine the social meaning of Eid as a collective act. Studies on *maslahah* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* also emphasize that preserving public unity and reducing ritual confusion are legitimate considerations in Islamic legal reasoning, especially when the issue concerns public acts of worship (Marwadi, 2021; Rofiuddin & Izzuddin, 2022).

This result does not mean that local authority eliminates all individual legal consequences. Rather, it shows that the law distinguishes between the public validity of Eid observance and the private completion of fasting obligations. The traveler may validly join the Eid of the host country because the declaration is attached to the community in which the traveler is physically present. This approach is consistent with fatwa materials from Dar al-Ifta Egypt and Dar al-Ifta Jordan, which state that a person who moves between countries follows the community or authority of the place where he or she is present in matters of fasting and breaking the fast. The same principle underlies the MUI approach in Indonesia, where the determination of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Dhu al-Hijjah is treated as a public religious matter requiring authoritative decision-making for social order and national coherence.

Obligation of Qaḍā' after Twenty-Eight Days of Fasting

The third result is that participation in the host community's Eid does not remove the traveler's obligation to make up the missing fast when the total number of fasts is only twenty-eight. Qaḍā' functions here as a corrective legal mechanism. It preserves the traveler's conformity with the host community during Eid while also restoring the personal completeness of the Ramadan obligation. The obligation of qaḍā' is grounded in the Qur'anic command to complete the prescribed number and in the general *fiqh* principle that missed obligatory fasts remain a personal liability until they are made up. Contemporary discussions of qaḍā' likewise affirm that public Eid participation does not replace the individual duty to compensate for missed Ramadan days (Ḥasan, 2023; Nisa' & Ulinnuha, 2021; Royyani et al., 2022).

This result is especially important because the traveler's deficiency is not caused by illness, deliberate abandonment, or ordinary travel concession alone, but by the interaction of two valid public calendars. The traveler may have begun Ramadan correctly in Country A and ended it publicly in Country B, yet the personal count may still fall below the legal minimum. In that situation, the law does not require the traveler to fast on Eid in order to complete the count

immediately. Instead, the person joins Eid with the local community and performs *qaḍā'* afterward. This conclusion is explicitly supported by the juristic statement found in *Asnā al-Maṭālib* [sumber primer mohon dilengkapi] that if a person fasts only twenty-eight days, one day must be made up because the month cannot be so short.

The distinction between Eid validity and fasting completeness may be summarized as follows. Eid validity depends on the recognized declaration of the relevant community or authority. Personal fasting completeness depends on whether the legally required Ramadan fasts have been fulfilled. These two dimensions can overlap in ordinary circumstances, but cross-border mobility can separate them. When they separate, *qaḍā'* mediates between the two. It allows the traveler to avoid public disagreement on Eid while also avoiding the doctrinal error of treating twenty-eight fasts as a complete Ramadan.

Table 2. Legal consequences of cross-border Ramadan fasting counts

Total fasts completed by traveler	Public action in destination country	Individual legal consequence
Twenty-eight days	Join Eid with the host community	<i>Qaḍā'</i> of one day is required after Eid
Twenty-nine days	Join Eid with the host community	No <i>qaḍā'</i> is required if the month is legally completed
Thirty days	Join Eid with the host community	No <i>qaḍā'</i> is required
Thirty-one days	Continue with the host community if Eid has not been declared	Treated as exceptional local conformity, although juristic debate remains

Ikhtilāf al-Maṭālib' and Cross-Border Lunar Calendars

The fourth result is that the problem of twenty-eight-day fasting is directly connected to *ikhtilāf al-maṭālib'*, or the difference of lunar horizons. Classical jurists debated whether a crescent sighting in one region is binding on Muslims in another region. The hadith of Kuraib and Ibn 'Abbās is frequently invoked as evidence that different regions may follow distinct crescent sightings. Al-Nawawī's discussion [sumber primer mohon dilengkapi] reflects this doctrinal complexity by distinguishing between nearby and distant regions and by recognizing that the strongest view in some cases does not oblige one distant region to follow another region's sighting. This classical debate remains highly relevant because modern state borders often transform differences in lunar visibility into differences in official Ramadan and Eid dates.

In contemporary settings, *ikhtilāf al-maṭālib'* is intensified by nation-state authority, religious bureaucracy, and divergent methods of lunar determination. Some states rely primarily on *rukyat*, others use *hisab*, and many employ mixed methods involving *imkān al-ru'yah* or MABIMS-style criteria. Scholarship on Southeast Asia and Indonesia demonstrates that official religious authorities, mass organizations, and regional bodies may all contribute to Ramadan and Eid determinations, sometimes producing convergence and sometimes producing public disagreement (Yaqin, 2023; Majid et al., 2023; Royyani et al., 2023; Abdulrahman, 2025). A traveler moving between these jurisdictions may therefore carry a personal fasting history that does not match the communal calendar of the destination country.

This result shows that the twenty-eight-day scenario is not an accidental anomaly, but a predictable consequence of mobility across plural lunar jurisdictions. Global travel, migration, diaspora life, and transnational work arrangements expose Muslims to overlapping religious calendars. Literature on diaspora and public religious authority emphasizes the need for transparent *isbat* processes, cross-border consultation, and clear guidance for travelers whose worship obligations intersect with more than one legal calendar (Ridwan & Zain, 2021; Mousavi & Schmidl,

2023; Musfiroh & Riza, 2022). The legal solution must therefore address both the doctrinal structure of the lunar month and the social reality of multiple legitimate communal determinations.

The Opposite Case of Thirty-One Days of Fasting

The fifth result concerns the opposite scenario, in which a traveler may fast thirty-one days because the destination country has not yet declared Eid. This case reveals a different legal tension. On one hand, the lunar month is normally limited to twenty-nine or thirty days. On the other hand, the traveler who has entered a new jurisdiction may be treated as part of the host community and expected to follow its public religious calendar. Juristic materials attributed to Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī and al-Khaṭīb al-Shirbīnī support the idea that a traveler who moves to another land becomes attached to its people in the final part of Ramadan, even if the traveler has already completed thirty days elsewhere.

Contemporary fatwa discussions reflect the same tension. Ibn Bāz is cited as holding that the traveler breaks the fast with the people of the destination country even if this results in more than thirty days, while also insisting that a person who has not completed twenty-nine days must make up the deficiency because the month cannot be less than twenty-nine. Dar al-Ifta Jordan's 2026 fatwa [sumber fatwa mohon dilengkapi] gives an especially clear practical formulation: the traveler follows the country where he or she is present in fasting and Eid; if the total is thirty-one, the person continues with the host community; if the total is twenty-eight, the person performs *qaḍā'* for one day.

The thirty-one-day case confirms that the governing issue is not arithmetic alone but the relationship between legal time, local authority, and communal belonging. Fasting beyond thirty days is not understood as expanding the legal length of Ramadan. Rather, it is treated by some jurists as an exceptional consequence of moving between different jurisdictions and becoming attached to the host community's public calendar. Other juristic approaches remain cautious because the lunar month's maximum is thirty days. The result is therefore more contested than the twenty-eight-day case. Nevertheless, both scenarios demonstrate the need for a legal distinction between communal conformity and individual completion. In the twenty-eight-day case, *qaḍā'* corrects the deficiency after Eid. In the thirty-one-day case, local conformity may justify continued fasting with the host community, though the act is best understood as an exceptional effect of cross-border movement rather than a redefinition of Ramadan's maximum legal length.

Discussion

Islamic Ritual Time as an Individual and Communal Legal Order

The findings of this study show that Islamic ritual time is neither purely individual nor exclusively communal. Ramadan fasting is a personal obligation imposed upon each legally responsible Muslim, yet its beginning and ending are determined through a public legal framework shaped by crescent visibility, testimony, authority, and communal practice. This dual character explains why the problem of twenty-eight-day fasting cannot be resolved by simple personal arithmetic alone. The traveler's own fasting count is legally relevant, but the public declaration of Eid in the destination country is also legally significant because Eid al-Fiṭr is a collective ritual embedded in the public order of a Muslim community. The canonical framework of *rukyat* and *istikmāl* establishes that fasting and breaking the fast are attached to the lunar month, not to a private calendar constructed by the individual (Musfiroh & Riza, 2022; Mufid & Djamaluddin, 2023; Maskufa et al., 2022). At the same time, modern state and religious institutions transform this framework into public decisions that regulate prayer, holidays, travel, family life, and civil administration (Majid et al., 2023; Ridwan & Zain, 2021).

This duality clarifies why the traveler should not visibly oppose the host community by fasting on a day publicly declared as Eid. A person who travels from one country to another enters a new ritual environment whose calendar has been established by a recognized community or

authority. The literature on local rukyat, isbat, and public authority shows that Ramadan and Eid determinations are mediated by institutions that evaluate testimony, apply visibility criteria, and seek social order (Marwadi, 2021). Therefore, the traveler is not merely changing geographical location but moving between legally meaningful lunar jurisdictions. If the traveler insists on a private calculation in visible contradiction to the local Eid declaration, the act may undermine the public character of Eid and intensify social confusion. This does not mean that communal authority creates the obligation of fasting itself, but it does mean that public ritual time is regulated through communal recognition.

Communal Conformity and the Corrective Function of Qaḍā'

The results also indicate that communal conformity has legal limits. Joining the host community in Eid does not retroactively transform twenty-eight fasts into a complete Ramadan. The obligation of qaḍā' is therefore central to the legal balance proposed by this study. It allows the traveler to recognize the public validity of the host community's Eid while maintaining the individual duty to complete the minimum number of Ramadan fasts. The Qur'anic principle of completing the prescribed number and the hadith-based rule that the lunar month is twenty-nine or thirty days prevent the law from treating twenty-eight days as a complete month. Contemporary treatments of qaḍā' similarly explain that make-up fasting preserves the integrity of the original obligation when days have not been fulfilled (Na'ali & Samiran, 2022; Gulam, 2023; Majid et al., 2023).

This mediating function is especially important because the traveler's deficiency may arise through no personal fault. In the case examined here, the person may have begun fasting correctly in Country A and joined Eid correctly in Country B. The deficiency emerges because two legitimate communal calendars do not align. The legal remedy is not to deny the legitimacy of the host Eid or to require the traveler to fast publicly on Eid. Rather, the remedy is to preserve the public Eid and repair the individual deficiency afterward. This approach reflects the structure of Islamic law as a system that protects both public order and personal accountability. It also prevents the reduction of Ramadan to either an entirely private act or a purely social convention. The traveler's public action follows the community, while the traveler's remaining liability is completed through qaḍā'.

Table 3. Relationship between public ritual conformity and individual fasting completeness

Legal dimension	Governing basis	Application to the traveler
Public Eid observance	Host community's recognized declaration through rukyat, istikmāl, or isbat	The traveler joins Eid with the community where he or she is present
Personal fasting completeness	Minimum legal structure of Ramadan as twenty-nine or thirty days	Twenty-eight fasts remain incomplete and require qaḍā'
Corrective mechanism	Qaḍā' for the missing obligatory fast	The missing day is made up after Eid, not on Eid itself
Legal balance	Maslahah, communal unity, and completion of obligation	Public conformity is preserved without negating individual responsibility

Ikhtilāf al-Maṭālī‘ in the Context of Contemporary Mobility

The discussion of twenty-eight-day fasting also demonstrates the continuing relevance of *ikhtilāf al-maṭālī‘*. In pre-modern *fiqh*, differing horizons were discussed mainly in relation to distant regions, communication of sighting reports, and the question of whether one region’s crescent sighting binds another. In the contemporary period, the same doctrine reappears through international travel, migration, diaspora communities, and national religious authorities. A Muslim can now move across multiple lunar jurisdictions within hours, making the classical question of local versus global sighting practically urgent rather than merely theoretical. The literature confirms that local *rukyat* and global or regional *matla‘* remain contested, with some scholars defending local sighting as the foundation of worship and others advocating coordinated criteria to reduce cross-border disagreement (Marwadi, 2021; Ridwan & Zain, 2021; Royyani et al., 2023).

Modern air travel therefore renews classical debates because it separates personal fasting history from present communal location. A person may begin Ramadan under one legal determination and end it under another. This creates cases that classical jurists anticipated only partially, but the conceptual resources of *fiqh* remain applicable. The hadith of Kuraib and Ibn ‘Abbas, the discussions of al-Nawawī on distant regions, and later juristic treatments of travelers moving between lands all show that Islamic law has long recognized the legal significance of geographical difference. What is new is not the existence of different horizons, but the speed and frequency with which Muslims now cross them. Contemporary scholarship on MABIMS, *imkān al-ru’yah*, and regional calendar coordination confirms that the challenge is not solved by asserting either localism or globalism in absolute terms. The more viable approach is a structured accommodation that preserves local religious legitimacy while creating mechanisms for cross-border coherence (Majid et al., 2023; Ridwan & Zain, 2021; Ningsih et al., 2024; Rofiuddin & Izzuddin, 2022).

Distinguishing the Validity of Eid from the Completeness of Fasting

One of the most significant implications of the study is the need to distinguish between the validity of Eid observance and the completeness of individual fasting. Eid may be valid for the traveler because it is declared by the community in which the traveler is present. This public validity derives from the host community’s recognized procedure, whether based on *rukyat*, *istikmāl*, *isbat*, or a hybrid model involving astronomical criteria. However, the traveler’s fasting completeness is assessed by whether the required number of Ramadan fasts has been fulfilled. These are related but not identical legal questions. Treating them as identical would lead either to unnecessary isolation from the community or to the mistaken assumption that public Eid automatically cancels personal deficiency.

The distinction also helps resolve the tension between the twenty-eight-day and thirty-one-day scenarios. In the twenty-eight-day case, the traveler joins Eid but makes up one day because the minimum legal structure of Ramadan has not been met. In the thirty-one-day case, some jurists hold that the traveler continues fasting with the destination community because the traveler has become part of that community’s public religious order. This position is supported by juristic statements attributed to *Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī* and *al-Khaṭīb al-Shirbīnī*, as well as contemporary fatwa discussions that prioritize following the destination community in the final stage of Ramadan. Yet this case remains more contested because it appears to exceed the normal maximum of the lunar month. The best interpretation is not that Ramadan legally expands beyond thirty days, but that cross-border movement may create an exceptional personal experience of fasting generated by attachment to different public calendars.

Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah, Public Welfare, and Legal Certainty

From a *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* perspective, the proposed legal treatment protects multiple values simultaneously. *Qaḍā’* preserves the integrity of worship and the individual’s accountability

before God. Following the host community preserves unity, prevents visible disagreement, and supports public religious order. Transparent isbat processes and coordinated calendar policies enhance legal certainty for travelers, diaspora communities, and institutions. The literature repeatedly identifies masalah mursalah as a key tool for managing disputes over Ramadan and Eid in contexts of modern mobility, especially where divergent calendars affect work, school, travel, and communal life (Ridwan & Zain, 2021; Royyani et al., 2023; Alimuddin & Anwar, 2022; Loucif et al., 2024; Maskufa et al., 2022; Marwadi, 2021).

This maqāṣid-based analysis does not replace textual rules with public convenience. Rather, it explains how textual rules are applied coherently under new circumstances. The command to complete the fast is preserved through qaḍā'. The public character of Eid is preserved through conformity with the host community. The legitimacy of local religious authority is preserved by recognizing the binding role of communal declarations. At the same time, the need for legal certainty supports broader coordination through regional criteria such as MABIMS, published isbat procedures, and transparent communication for travelers and diaspora communities (Maskufa et al., 2022; Ḥasan, 2023; Fanani & Widigdo, 2022; Musfiroh & Riza, 2022; Alimuddin & Anwar, 2022). Such mechanisms do not eliminate ikhtilāf al-maṭālī', but they reduce its disruptive effects.

Implications for Contemporary Islamic Legal Adaptation

The findings contribute to contemporary Islamic legal studies by showing how classical principles can be adapted to transnational mobility without abandoning their textual foundations. The case of twenty-eight-day fasting demonstrates that fiqh can address new travel-induced anomalies through existing categories: rukyat, istikmāl, ikhtilāf al-maṭālī', communal authority, and qaḍā'. The required adaptation is not doctrinal replacement but careful legal differentiation. Fasting remains an individual obligation. Eid remains a communal declaration. Lunar visibility remains legally significant. Qaḍā' remains the corrective mechanism for deficiency. What changes is the context in which these doctrines interact.

This has practical implications for religious authorities, Muslim minority institutions, airlines, migrant communities, and transnational families. Authorities should provide explicit guidance for travelers who begin Ramadan in one country and end it in another. Public statements should distinguish between joining Eid and completing personal fasting obligations. Regional bodies should continue developing transparent criteria that support coordination without denying legitimate local practice. Technology, astronomical data, and predictive visibility tools may assist legal decision-making, but they should remain supportive rather than substitutive in relation to fiqh authority (Güney, 2024; Jomier, 2024; Majid et al., 2023; Musonnif, 2021; Musfiroh & Riza, 2022). In this framework, Islamic law responds to mobility by organizing the relationship between text, place, authority, and responsibility rather than by collapsing them into a single uniform rule.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that a twenty-eight-day Ramadan caused by cross-border mobility cannot be treated as a legally complete Ramadan in Islamic law. The principal finding is that Ramadan, as a lunar month, is legally structured as either twenty-nine or thirty days, determined through crescent sighting or completion of the month. Therefore, when a traveler begins Ramadan in one country and joins Eid al-Fiṭr in another after fasting only twenty-eight days, the person may validly observe Eid with the host community but remains obligated to perform qaḍā' for one missing day after Eid.

The study also shows that Islamic ritual time operates through both individual obligation and communal authority. Fasting is personally binding, but Ramadan and Eid are publicly regulated through lunar visibility, local authority, and communal practice. Qaḍā' functions as a legal mechanism that reconciles these two dimensions by preserving communal unity while maintaining

individual ritual completeness. The findings further demonstrate the contemporary relevance of ikhtilāf al-maṭālī‘ in cases of migration, air travel, diaspora life, and national religious calendars.

This research contributes to Islamic legal studies by clarifying the distinction between the validity of communal Eid participation and the completeness of personal fasting obligations. It offers a normative-juridical framework for addressing mobility-induced Ramadan discrepancies without abandoning classical fiqh principles. Further research may examine comparative institutional fatwas, diaspora mosque practices, and the role of regional lunar-calendar harmonization in reducing cross-border ritual uncertainty. For Indonesian legal studies in particular, the framework invites further work on how the sidang isbat, the fatwas of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), and the religious courts can provide clear guidance for cross-border worshippers, thereby strengthening legal certainty within a pluralist legal order.

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