

## CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS UNDER ISLAMIC LAW

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### Abstract:

In the article, provides a detailed exploration of the rights and obligations of citizens under Islamic law. It discusses fundamental rights such as the right to life, justice, religious freedom, property ownership, education, fair wages, and participation in governance. Additionally, it highlights obligations, including adherence to laws, payment of zakat, upholding justice, maintaining peace, and respecting others' rights. The article also emphasizes the role of consultation (Shura) in governance, historical examples of religious tolerance, and modern applications of Islamic principles in governance and society. It concludes by underscoring the balance between rights and responsibilities that contribute to justice, social harmony, and moral integrity in an Islamic framework.

**Keywords:** Islamic law, Sharia, justice, rights and obligations, religious freedom, governance, Shura, property rights, education, fair wages, social harmony.

### Introduction

Islamic law, also known as Sharia, provides a comprehensive framework for governing individuals and societies based on the principles of justice, equality, and morality. Derived from the Quran, the Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), Ijma (consensus of scholars), and Qiyas (analogical reasoning), Islamic law outlines the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a Muslim society. This article explores these rights and obligations in light of Islamic principles.

### Citizens' rights under islamic law:

- **right to life and security** – islamic law upholds the sanctity of human life. The Quran states, "Whoever kills a person unjustly, it is as though he has killed all of mankind" (Quran 5:32). Citizens have the right to safety, protection from harm, and a secure environment;
- **right to justice and fair trial** – sharia guarantees the right to justice and a fair trial. The Quran commands, "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice" (Quran 4:58). No individual should be punished without due process, and everyone is entitled to defend themselves in court;
- **right to freedom of religion** – Islamic law upholds the principle of religious freedom, ensuring that individuals have the right to practice their faith without coercion. The Quran states, "There is no compulsion in religion" (Quran 2:256), reinforcing the idea that faith should be a matter of personal conviction rather than forced adherence. In an Islamic society, non-Muslims (dhimmis) are granted religious autonomy and protection under the state. They are free to worship according to their beliefs, maintain their religious institutions, and govern their personal affairs in accordance with their religious laws. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) established



this principle through various treaties, such as the Charter of Medina, which granted religious minorities the right to coexist peacefully alongside Muslims. Furthermore, Islamic history provides numerous examples of religious tolerance. During the Caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab, when he conquered Jerusalem, he ensured the protection of Christian holy sites and prohibited their destruction. Islamic rulers, such as those in Andalusia, allowed Muslims, Christians, and Jews to live harmoniously and contribute to society in fields such as science, philosophy, and medicine. However, religious freedom in an Islamic state operates within a framework of mutual respect. While individuals are allowed to practice their faith, public order and morality are also considered. Blasphemy, incitement to violence, or actions that seek to undermine the social fabric of the community are generally discouraged. Yet, the guiding principle remains that individuals should not be forced into religious practices against their will. In modern times, various Islamic nations interpret and implement religious freedom differently. Some emphasize a pluralistic approach, ensuring equal rights for all religious groups, while others impose restrictions based on their interpretations of Sharia. Nonetheless, the foundational Islamic principle remains that belief is a personal matter, and no one should be compelled to adopt a religion they do not accept.

- **right to property and ownership** – islamic law upholds the right to own, buy, sell, and inherit property. It prohibits unjust confiscation and requires fair trade practices. The Quran emphasizes, “Do not consume one another’s wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers...” (Quran 2:188);

- **right to education** – islam places great importance on education, considering it a right and a duty for all citizens. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim” (Ibn Majah);

- **right to work and fair wages** – islamic law supports economic rights, ensuring that workers are fairly compensated. The Prophet Muhammad emphasized, “Give the worker his wages before his sweat dries” (Ibn Majah);

- **right to participate in governance** – Islamic law advocates for the participation of citizens in governance through the principle of **Shura** (consultation). The Quran states, “And those who have responded to [the needs of] their ruler through consultation among themselves, and who establish prayer and spend from what We have provided them” (Quran 42:38). This verse highlights the importance of collective decision-making in an Islamic society. In an Islamic governance system, leaders are expected to seek counsel from their citizens, ensuring that government policies reflect the will of the people while remaining in accordance with Islamic principles. The practice of Shura was exemplified during the rule of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, who regularly consulted with scholars, tribal leaders, and the general public before making decisions. Furthermore, Islamic governance emphasizes accountability. Leaders are not above the law, and they must rule with justice and fairness. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “The best of leaders among you are those whom you love and who love you, who pray for you and for whom you pray” (Muslim). This demonstrates that governance should be a responsibility rooted in service to the people rather than personal gain. Additionally, Islamic teachings encourage the participation of both men and women in governance. Historical examples show that women played significant roles in advising leaders and influencing policy decisions. For instance, during the Caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab, Shifa bint Abdullah was



appointed as a market inspector, ensuring fair trade practices. In modern times, many Muslim-majority countries incorporate elements of Shura into their political systems, allowing citizens to vote, engage in public discourse, and hold their leaders accountable. While interpretations of governance vary across regions, the fundamental Islamic principle remains: rulers must act in the best interest of the people and uphold justice.

### Citizens' obligations under islamic law:

- **obligation to obey laws** – islam encourages obedience to just rulers and legal systems. The Quran states, “Obey Allah, obey the Messenger, and those in authority among you” (Quran 4:59). However, if a law contradicts Islamic principles, citizens are encouraged to seek peaceful reform;
- **obligation to pay zakat and taxes** – financial contributions, such as zakat (charitable tax) and other lawful taxes, are obligatory for eligible Muslims. This supports social welfare and economic stability in society;
- **obligation to uphold justice** – citizens must act justly in all dealings, whether in legal matters, business, or personal interactions. The Quran instructs, "Stand firm for justice, even if it is against yourselves" (Quran 4:135);
- **obligation to maintain peace and order** – islam forbids spreading corruption and unrest in society. The Quran warns, “Do not cause corruption upon the earth after its reformation” (Quran 7:56). Citizens must contribute to maintaining peace and security;
- **obligation to respect others' rights** – every citizen is responsible for respecting the rights of others, including their neighbors, family members, and fellow citizens. The Prophet Muhammad said, “None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself” (Bukhari & Muslim);
- **obligation to seek knowledge and contribute to society** – muslims are encouraged to seek beneficial knowledge and use it for the betterment of society. This includes professional, scientific, and religious knowledge that helps in societal progress;
- **obligation to enjoin good and forbid evil** – islamic law advocates for the participation of citizens in governance through the principle of **Shura** (consultation). The Quran states, “And those who have responded to [the needs of] their ruler through consultation among themselves, and who establish prayer and spend from what We have provided them” (Quran 42:38). This verse highlights the importance of collective **decision-making** in an Islamic society. In an Islamic governance system, leaders are expected to seek counsel from their citizens, ensuring that government policies reflect the will of the people while remaining in accordance with Islamic principles. The practice of **Shura** was exemplified during the rule of the **Rightly Guided Caliphs**, who regularly consulted with scholars, tribal leaders, and the general public before making decisions. Furthermore, **Islamic governance** emphasizes **accountability**. Leaders are not above the law, and they must rule with **justice** and **fairness**. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “The best of leaders among you are those whom you love and who love you, who pray for you and for whom you pray” (Muslim). This demonstrates that governance should be a responsibility rooted in **service to the people** rather than personal gain. Additionally, **Islamic teachings** encourage the participation of both **men and women** in governance. Historical examples show that women played significant roles in advising leaders and influencing policy decisions. For instance, during the **Caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab**, **Shifa**



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In conclusion Islamic law provides a balanced system of rights and obligations that ensure justice, equality, and social harmony. While it grants individuals numerous rights, it also emphasizes their responsibilities toward society. By adhering to these principles, a Muslim society can achieve prosperity, security, and moral integrity. The implementation of these laws requires wisdom, justice, and flexibility to address contemporary challenges while remaining true to Islamic values.

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