

TOWARDS A CONTEMPORARY FATWA FRAMEWORK FOR MOSQUE QIBLA ORIENTATION: A CRITICAL STUDY OF EGYPT AND MALAYSIA'S DIVERGENT APPROACHES

Mohamad Syahmi Mohamad Asri^{1a}, Muhamad Syazwan Faid^{2b}, Manswab Mahsen Abdulrahman^{3c}, Nurul Kausar Nizam^{4d} and Mohd Saiful Anwar Mohd Nawawi^{5a*}

^aDepartment of Fiqh-USul & Applied Science, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA.

E-mail: syahmi1171@gmail.com¹

E-mail: saifulanwar@um.edu.my⁵

^bDepartment of Islamic Studies, Centre for General Studies and Co-Curricular, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn, MALAYSIA.

E-mail: mdsyazwan@uthm.edu.my²

^cIslamic University in Uganda, Mbale, UGANDA.

E-mail: manswab@iuiu.ac.ug³

^dPersatuan Jurufalak Syarie, Putrajaya, MALAYSIA.

E-mail: nurulkausarnizam@gmail.com⁴

*Corresponding Author: saifulanwar@um.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the differing fatwa approaches in determining the permissible limit of qibla deviation between two major Muslim countries, Malaysia and Egypt, which each possess distinct jurisprudential traditions, technological capabilities, and socio-cultural contexts. While there are number of qibla deviation standard developed worldwide, the international standard fatwa for Qibla deviation still needs to be comprehensively developed. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to develop a principled yet flexible fatwa formulation guideline that is contextualized to local realities and aligned with the objectives of Islamic law (maqāsid al-sharī'ah). Two main case studies are utilized. This research compares the approaches adopted by the National Fatwa Committee of Malaysia and Dar al-Ifta' al-Misriyyah (Egypt), by adopting qualitative content analysis of official fatwa documents, online repositories, and institutional publications. The finding shows that first is the fatwa issued by the National Fatwa Committee for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia, which limits qibla deviation to a maximum of 3°, based on a precision-based approach that relies on modern technology and is influenced by the Shāfi'ī school of thought. The second is the fatwa by Dar al-Ifta' al-Misriyyah in Egypt, which permits a deviation of up to ±45°, based on a convenience-based approach that considers historical factors, public interest (maslahah), and the traditional jurisprudence of the Ḥanafī school. The study therefore highlights the gaps in cross-jurisdictional coordination, adoption, and technical adequacy, rather than a complete absence of guidance. The study proposes a fatwa guideline framework based on four key parameters: level of technological readiness, madhhab orientation, social and historical context of the community, and the need to

uphold the objectives of Islamic law (maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah). The study recommends that the formulation of qibla-related fatwas be contextual, integrated, and systematic, and serve as a reference for other Muslim countries, seeking to develop more sustainable and contemporary qibla determination framework.

Keywords: Qibla direction - Egypt’s Dar al-Ifta’ – Malaysian National fatwa - Maximum deviation - Maslahah

1. INTRODUCTION

The definition of qibla according to An-Nawawi is the very structure the Ka’bah for the one who can see it, and its general direction for the one who is distant from it (Al-Nawawi, 1929). Al-Biruni wrote in defining Qibla as

“Know that the qibla is the great circle passing from the location of the worshipper to the Noble Mecca on the surface of the spherical Earth; and the point where this circle intersects the horizon of that place is the azimuth of the qibla.”

Biruni is the first scholar that defined Qibla direction using the great circle definition (Sanjaya et al., 2019). Obtaining the geographical coordinates, namely the latitude and longitude of the specified location and the Kaaba, is crucial for determining the qibla direction from a given location in order to perform *ibadah* obligations (Ahmad Zaki et al., 2019).

Based on the Qur’ānic texts and the Prophet ﷺ’s hadith, facing the Qibla (استقبال القبلة) is a *clear religious obligation* (واجب شرعي) and a *sharṭ* (شرط) for the validity of prayer (ṣalāh). However, determining (taḥqīq al-qiblah) or identifying its direction is not the obligation itself, but rather a *wasīlah* (وسيلة), a necessary means to fulfill the obligation of facing the Qibla (Umar, 2025). It constitutes a condition for the validity of prayer (ṣalāh) and symbolizes the unity of the Muslim ummah in worship. This ruling can be summarized as follows:

قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا ۗ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ ۗ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ ۗ

“We have certainly seen the turning of your face, [O Muhammad], toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a qibla with which you will be pleased. So, turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Haram. And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces toward it [in prayer] ...” (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:144)

This verse is a clear directive from Allah SWT to the Prophet SAW and the Muslim community to face the Kaaba, or al-Masjid al-Haram, as the qibla

instead of Bayt al-Maqdis, or Jerusalem. (Abu Hayyan Muhammad ibn Yusuf, 2002)

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ
شَطْرَهُ ۚ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ

“And from wherever you go out [for prayer], turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Haram. And wherever you [believers] may be, turn your faces toward it...” (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:150)

This verse further emphasizes that the obligation to face the qibla is universal and permanent, applying at all times and places of prayer. (al-Alusi al-Kabir, 1987)

1.1 Hadith of Abu Hurairah RA:

“When you stand for prayer, complete your ablution properly, then face the qibla and pronounce the takbir.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Given that it follows the instruction to perform ablution (*wuḍūʿ*), this ḥadīth establishes a clear linkage between facing the *qibla* and the legitimacy of *ṣalāh*, emphasizing its indispensable role within the sequence of worship (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1993). Muslim jurists have reached *ijmāʿ* (إجماع) on the *wujūb al-istiqbāl fī al-farḍ* (وجوب الاستقبال في الفرض), that facing the *qibla* is an obligatory act and a *sharṭ ṣiḥḥah* (شرط صحة) for the validity of obligatory prayers. However, this consensus pertains to the *principle of obligation* itself; scholars differed (*ikhtilaf*) regarding whether the obligation entails facing the exact physical structure of the Kaʿbah (ʿayn al-Kaʿbah) or merely its general direction (*jihah al-Kaʿbah*) for those distant from Mecca. Likewise, differences exist concerning whether a prayer must be repeated or compensated (*iʿādah/qaḍāʾ*) when later discovery reveals a mistaken orientation. Thus, while facing the *qibla* is an established religious duty and a condition for the validity of *ṣalāh*, the scope and application of this duty reflect a varies in jurisprudential discourse. Beyond its legal dimension, the *qibla* also symbolizes the unity of the Muslim ummah in creed (*ʿaqīdah*) and worship (*ibādah*). This hadith explicitly establishes facing the *qibla* as a prerequisite for valid prayer, alongside ablution and the opening takbir. (Al-Nawawi, 1929)

1.2 Hadith of Jabir bin ʿAbdillah RA

“The Prophet (SAW) would perform voluntary prayers on his camel facing whichever direction it turned, but when he intended to perform an obligatory prayer, he would dismount and face the qibla.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari)

This hadith demonstrates that facing a general direction is only permitted for voluntary prayers during travel, whereas facing the qibla precisely is obligatory for the five daily prayers (Al-`Asqalani, 1993).

1.3 *Imam al-Nawawi (Shāfi`ī School)*

“Facing the qibla is a condition for the validity of prayer according to scholarly consensus (ijmā’).”

Imam al-Nawawi stated that there is no disagreement among scholars regarding the obligation to face the qibla. He also emphasized that the direction of the qibla should be determined with full caution (*iḥtiyāt*), especially for individuals located far from the Kaaba (al-Nawawi, 2010).

1.4 *Imam Abu Ḥanīfah (Ḥanafī School)*

The Ḥanafī school allows Muslims who are far from the Kaaba to face the general direction (*jihah*) of the Kaaba, rather than the exact structure. This opinion is based on *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) and the consideration of the public interest (*maṣlahah*) for Muslims who do not have access to precise measuring instruments.

“For those who are far from Mecca, it is sufficient to face the general direction of the Kaaba. It is not obligatory to align the body exactly with the physical building of the Kaaba.” (Kasani, 2000).

1.5 *Imam Mālik (Mālikī School)*

Imam Mālik also inclined towards the *jihah al-Ka`bah* approach, especially in the context of Muslims living in regions very distant from Mecca. This perspective aligns with the practical method still employed in places like Morocco today.

“A person praying in a place far from the Kaaba is not required to determine the exact direction; it suffices for him to face the general direction.” (Qurtubi, 2002).

1.6 *Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (Ḥanbalī School)*

Imam Aḥmad adopted a more cautious approach, requiring the worshipper to face the exact structure of the Kaaba (*‘ayn al-Ka`bah*), provided that the individual is capable of determining the precise direction.

“If a person is able to ascertain the direction of the Kaaba, then it becomes obligatory for him to face it directly.” (Ibn Qudamah, 1999).

These discussions frequently explore the historical shift in the qibla direction, as well as the methodologies used to determine it (King, 2005), particularly for communities unable to view the Kaaba directly (Sanjaya et al., 2019). In the context of Malaysia, the significant distance of approximately 7,220 kilometers from the Masjid al-Ḥaram makes it practically impossible for Muslims to visually ascertain the Kaaba with certainty when determining the qibla direction. (Faid et al., 2022) Due to Malaysia’s considerable geographical distance from the Kaaba, the concept of *jihah* of the Kaaba which means it is sufficient to face the general direction of the qibla rather than the precise physical structure of the Kaaba itself is applied (Yildirim et al., 2025).

Across Malaysia, the qibla azimuth varies slightly according to geographical location. In most parts of Peninsular Malaysia, the azimuth falls between 291° and 293°, particularly for central and southern regions such as Kuala Lumpur, Melaka, and Johor. However, in the northern states, the qibla direction is closer to 289°–291°, while in East Malaysia, it ranges between 292° and 295°, depending on longitude. This means that even a small angular deviation, as little as one degree from the correct qibla azimuth, can correspond to a lateral displacement of about 110–125 km from the Ka’bah. This demonstrates the importance of accurate astronomical and geodetic determination methods in modern qibla orientation practices. To address this issue, a national guidelines has been officially published by National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia, which state that the permissible margin of deviation in qibla direction should not exceed 3 degrees.

In contrast, Egypt’s Dār al-Iftā’ has issued a ruling permitting a maximum angular deviation of up to 45 degrees from the exact qibla direction. However, this margin should be understood within the fiqh context of validity (*ṣiḥḥah*), grounded in the doctrine of *jihah al-Ka’bah* (جبهة الكعبة), that is, facing the *general direction* of the Ka’bah for those at a great distance from Mecca. It does not imply a technical or constructional tolerance for the alignment of the *miḥrāb* or architectural qibla. The two standards therefore reflect different epistemic domains: one pertaining to legal validity (fiqh al-ṣalāh) and the other to geodetic precision (‘ilm al-hay’ah).

Moreover, the decision by the state of Perlis to align with the fatwa issued by Egypt’s Dar al-Ifta’, rather than adhering to the national fatwa established by Malaysia’s authoritative religious bodies, has raised critical academic and

administrative concerns. As a constituent state within the Federation of Malaysia, Perlis is expected to observe and uphold the legal and religious directives established at the national level to maintain uniformity and legal coherence in matters of Islamic jurisprudence. The preference for an external fatwa may lead to fragmented religious practices within the country and pose challenges to the centralization of Islamic legal authority, particularly in qibla orientation which directly affects daily worship among the Muslim populace. This divergence invites further inquiry into the limits of capability of federal religious entity in facilitating united religious rulings within federal systems.

Globally, there are several official fatwas and guidelines related to the determination of the qibla direction, as shown in the table below:

Table 1. Fatwas and Guidelines on Permissible Qibla Direction Deviation in Selected Muslim-Majority Countries

Country	Authoritative Body	Fatwa / Guideline	Notes & Citation
Malaysia (Sarawak)	Majlis Islam Sarawak (recognized by National Fatwa Council)	Deviation limit must not exceed 3° from the qibla direction during mosque mihrab construction	<i>Fatwa Ruling on the Limit of Deviation From Qibla Direction</i> , 13 March 2023 (lawnet.sarawak.gov.my)
Egypt	Dar al-Ifta' al-Misriyyah	Deviation up to ±45° is acceptable for valid worship	Darul Ifta' Egypt Ruling
Indonesia	Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) & Badan Hisab Rukyat	No official numerical limit, but MUI issued a fatwa on qibla direction (northwest) based on location	<i>Fatwa No. 03/2010 & 05/2010</i> ; study in <i>Esensia</i> (UIN Sunan Kalijaga)
Brunei	State Mufti Department / Astronomical Society of Brunei	Technical guidance based on astronomical data and local rukyah, no official angular limit	Based on local practices; no publicly available fatwa document
Saudi Arabia	Lajnah al-Dā'imah lil-Ifta'	Emphasizes accuracy in qibla direction using modern tools, no specific angular limit	No specific number; emphasis on technology and <i>qasdu al-Ka'bah</i>
Singapore	Majlis Ugama	Supports use of	General guidelines for

	Islam Singapura (MUIS)	calculation and field measurements, no official limit	mosque and prayer space construction
Jordan	General Ifta' Department	Validates qibla direction through scientific metrics (Royal Jordanian Geographic Center), allows practical flexibility	Moderate fiqh; no declared angular limit
Türkiye	Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı	Deviation up to $\pm 45^\circ$ is acceptable for valid worship	Diyanet Ruling
Iran	Office of the Supreme Leader (Ja'fari School)	Emphasizes qibla accuracy using modern technology, but no known official angular limit	Based on Ja'fari approach and use of modern apps
Morocco	Conseil Supérieur des Oulémas	No numerical fatwa available; follows Maliki school's principle of general direction (<i>jihah al-Ka'bah</i>)	No specific degree limit; based on principle of <i>qasdu al-Ka'bah</i>

The determination of the qibla is a fundamental aspect of Islamic worship, particularly in the performance of ṣalāh. Thus, the formulation of a fatwa that provides clear and practical guidance regarding permissible deviation in qibla direction is essential. In many Muslim-majority countries, such as Malaysia, Egypt, and Indonesia, such fatwas have played a critical role in ensuring consistency, precision, and public confidence in religious observance. Conversely, in countries where no formal fatwa has been issued on permissible deviation, ambiguity in legal and practical application persists.

A properly formulated fatwa serves as a central reference for religious authorities, mosque architects, surveyors, and the public, particularly in the context of mosque construction or the realignment of existing prayer spaces is vital. Furthermore, it becomes a unifying instrument for religious rulings, especially in countries with structured Islamic governance systems. A key question arises: Should all Muslim-majority countries prioritize directional accuracy as strictly as nations like Malaysia and Jordan, or adopt a more flexible approach as seen in Indonesia and Morocco?

The emphasis on directional accuracy is often associated with the use of modern astronomical calculations, geospatial tools, and fatwas grounded in literal interpretations of Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions. On the other hand, countries such as Morocco, which follow the Mālikī school, uphold the principle of *qasdu al-Ka'bah*, facing the general direction of the Kaaba, rather than *'aynu al-Ka'bah*, facing the exact physical structure of the Kaaba. Indonesia has adopted a technical and institutional approach through its Ministry of Religious Affairs and Rukyat-Hisab Authority, without enforcing a specific numerical limit for qibla deviation.

Hence, the necessity of precision cannot be universally prescribed. It must be contextualized based on local needs, dominant jurisprudential traditions, socio-cultural norms, technological readiness, and human resource capabilities. In principle, the formulation of fatwas concerning qibla direction is influenced by several interrelated factors. First, *Maṣlahah Mursalah* is a key factor in deriving fatwa rulings. For instance, Malaysia's 3 degrees deviation tolerance allows for minor technical discrepancies during mosque construction without significantly compromising directional accuracy. This approach reflects a balance between scientific precision and practical feasibility.

Second, jurisprudential tendencies or madhhab inclinations also play a role. Countries aligned with the Shāfi'ī and Ḥanbalī schools often emphasize precision, whereas Mālikī-based jurisdictions like Morocco are more accepting of *jihah al-Ka'bah* (general direction of the Kaaba) without requiring absolute accuracy. Third, the factor of technological awareness and availability also plays a vital role in fatwa formulation. Countries religious authority with high scientific and technical awareness and availability typically use modern technologies such as satellite data, mobile applications, as well as instruments like theodolites and GPS to ensure that the qibla direction can be determined and verified accurately. Lastly, the social and historical context of a country is also considered in the formulation of fatwas. For example, in countries with a number of old mosques, the original qibla direction may have been determined based on sunrise orientation or local traditions. Therefore, any fatwa formulated must also consider historical values and community sensitivities before making rulings that could significantly impact the identity and structure of long-standing mosques.

This paper subsequently proposes a legal jurisprudence framework for the formulation of fatwas concerning permissible deviation limits in qibla direction at the country-wide religious authority level. This framework is developed by referring to and analyzing the differences in fatwa approaches between Egypt's Dar al-Ifta and Malaysia's National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia. Through this comparison, the paper seeks to present a model

framework that considers not only legal methodology but also the social and local realities of each country. It is hoped that a flexible yet *shari'ah*-compliant fatwa model can be developed. Such a model may serve as a guide for other Muslim-majority countries in addressing the issue of qibla direction accuracy in a more systematic, inclusive, and context-sensitive manner.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study chooses to examine two primary fatwas concerning the permissible deviation in qibla direction, as issued by Malaysia and Egypt, because both represent two distinct approaches in fatwa formulation in terms of methodology, jurisprudential background, and contextual considerations. This comparison offers a broad spectrum of how the issue of qibla direction is addressed across various geographical, fiqh, and technical settings.

The guidelines issued by the National Fatwa Committee for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia (under the coordination of the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, JAKIM) stipulates that the permissible deviation from the qibla direction must not exceed 3 degrees and is treated by state mufti offices as a practical standard.

In contrast, the fatwas issued by Dār al-Iftā' al-Miṣriyyah (The Egyptian National Fatwa Authority) address qibla orientation from the perspective of *jihah al-Ka'bah* (جهة الكعبة), facing the general direction of the Ka'bah. The purpose of these fatwas is not to define a fixed angular limit such as $\pm 45^\circ$ from the true azimuth of the Ka'bah, but to clarify prayer validity in existing mosques where structural realignment is impractical.

These two fatwas are selected as case studies because they represent two contrasting ends of the spectrum in contemporary Islamic astronomical *ijtihad*, one that maximizes the use of technology to achieve accuracy (Malaysia), and another that emphasizes convenience and the preservation of community heritage (Egypt). Therefore, a comparative analysis of these two approaches provides valuable guidance for other Muslim-majority countries in formulating national fatwas that are appropriate to their respective social, historical, and technological contexts. To address the research issue, this study used content analysis of fatwas. This research was designed using a method that ensures a focused and objective-driven search aligned with the aims of the study. The following research questions have been developed based on this framework: first, what is the concept of qibla determination from the perspective of Islamic astronomical jurisprudence? Second, how is the determination of the qibla direction carried out? Third, why do Malaysian and Egyptian Dar al-Ifta's acceptable qibla deviation limits differ from one another? Based on this

research question, a framework literature review was carried out on qibla-related fatwas issued in Egypt and Malaysia, along with an examination of the fundamental causes of the discrepancies between these decisions. In order to gather and assess fatwas that address the question of the acceptable range of deviation in qibla direction, a documentation process was first conducted.

The information gathered during the documentation process was taken from the official websites of the National Fatwa Council of Malaysia, the Perlis State Mufti Department, and Dar al-Ifta' of Egypt. According to the study's objectives, the fatwas collected from these platforms were then sifted to only those that were specifically pertinent to the problem of qibla orientation. This procedure revealed that the state of Perlis's fatwa qibla differs from that of other Malaysian states. Interestingly, even though Perlis is a part of Malaysia, the Perlis fatwa is more in line with the stance taken by Dar al-Ifta' of Egypt. Therefore, this study necessitates a more detailed investigation to identify the underlying factors contributing to the divergence of qibla-related fatwas within Malaysia. The following procedures were undertaken to collect relevant fatwas as demonstrated in Figure 1.

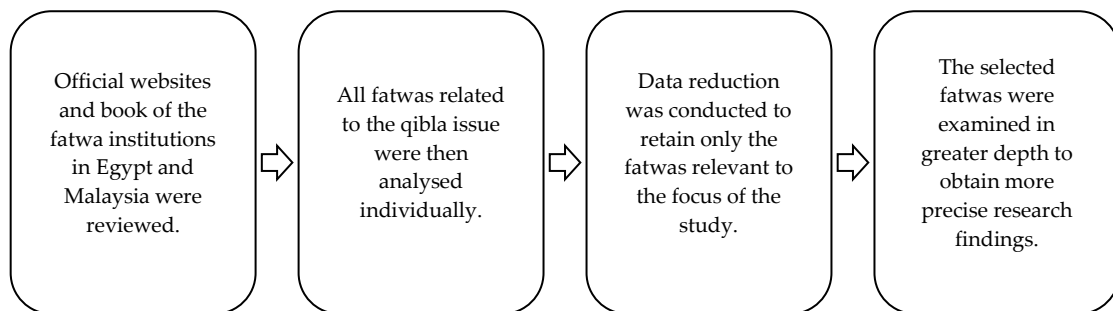


Figure 1. Flow Chart for the fatwa documentation procedures.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

3.1 *The fatwas analysis in determining the permissible range of qibla deviation.*

The guidance issued by Dār al-Iftā' al-Miṣriyyah does not prescribe a fixed numerical deviation for determining or constructing the qibla direction. Instead, it addresses the validity of prayer orientation based on the principle of jihah al-Ka'bah (جهة الكعبة), that is, facing the general direction of the Ka'bah, particularly for mosques already established or for congregations where precise realignment is impractical. In this juridical context, the ± 45 degrees reference represents a conceptual window of validity (ṣaḥīḥ al-ṣalāh), not a technical accuracy standard for qibla measurement or architectural alignment.

By contrast, in Malaysia, the ± 3 degrees limit originates from an administrative guideline, formalized during the 79th Muzakarah (Conference) of the Fatwa Committee of the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs (MKI), held from 6–8 September 2007. These 3 degrees tolerance was established solely as a practical engineering standard to guide the construction and orientation of new mosques and musollas, ensuring consistency in architectural qibla alignment across the country. It was never intended as a religious ruling affecting the validity of individual prayer.

The State of Sarawak officially gazetted a fatwa on 13 September 2023, entitled *Fatwa on the Legal Ruling Regarding Qibla Deviation Limit*, which stipulates that the deviation of a mosque's mihrāb direction must not exceed 3° (Fatwa Ruling on the Limit of Deviation from Qibla, 2023). As a result, this fatwa now holds legal authority under Section 37 of the Sarawak Islamic Council Ordinance 2001, making it binding upon Muslims in the state. In practice, enforcement of this fatwa is directed primarily toward the managing bodies of mosques and suraus (*jawātankuasa pengurusan masjid/surau*), ensuring that new constructions and existing structures comply with the stipulated qibla alignment. The focus of implementation is on rectification and technical adjustment, rather than on punitive action against individuals. Relevant authorities may therefore issue directives for realignment or corrective works in cases where the deviation of a mosque's qibla exceeds the prescribed 3 degree threshold (Fatwa Ruling on the Limit of Deviation from Qibla, 2023).

Meanwhile, the state of Perlis, through its 38th State Fatwa Committee Meeting held on 8–9 November 2018, issued a fatwa stating that the maximum allowable deviation in Qibla direction is 45 degree for already constructed mosque with misaligned Qibla direction. This position stands in contrast to the guideline issued by federal religious body. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Perlis adopts a similar approach to that of Egypt in determining the permissible limit of qibla deviation.

The Egyptian approach is often explained with reference to the ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ:

« مَا بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ قِبْلَةٌ »

(“What lies between the east and the west is qibla”, narrated by al-Tirmidhī).

This ḥadīth is interpreted by Dār al-Iftā' al-Miṣriyyah as indicating a range of validity (*ṣaḥīḥ al-ṣalāh*). The reference to a 90 degrees sector (45° to either side of the true qibla) serves to express legal leniency within the doctrine of *jihah al-Ka'bah* (جهة الكعبة), facing the general direction of the Ka'bah, especially for distant regions where pinpoint precision was historically unattainable. However, this interpretation does not imply that worshippers may

intentionally face anywhere within that sector. Instead, they remain obliged to exert due effort (*ijtihād*) to determine and face the most accurate direction possible (*ghalabat al-ẓann*), using available means and knowledge. The *ḥadīth*, therefore, sets the outer boundary of validity, not the intended target of alignment. Considering Egypt's geographical position northwest of the Ka'bah, worshippers face the general southeast direction during prayer. Within this orientation, minor deviations do not invalidate *ṣalāh*, provided that the prayer direction remains within the recognized *jihah* toward Mecca (درجة الانحراف (The Degree of Permissible Deviation from the Qibla for Adjusting the Rows), 2011).

3.2 *Rationale Behind Divergent Opinions in the Context of Fiqh*

All schools of Islamic jurisprudence unanimously agree on the obligation to face the qibla during prayer. This obligation is particularly emphasized for individuals who are within the vicinity of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and are able to observe the Kaaba directly with their own eyes, whereby they are required to face the *'ayn* (exact structure) of the Kaaba itself. However, divergent scholarly opinions emerge with regard to the obligation of facing the *'ayn* (exact structure) versus the *jihah* (general direction) of the Kaaba for those who are unable to view it directly, such as individuals located at a considerable distance from Mecca. These differences also extend to the discussion on the permissible margin of deviation in qibla orientation for such individuals. In light of the fact that Dar al-Ifta' of Egypt tends to align with the Ḥanafī school of thought, while Malaysia Fatwa Council adheres to the Shāfi'ī school, this discussion will therefore focus more specifically on the perspectives and legal reasoning of these two schools.

According to scholars of the Ḥanafī school, the obligation to face the *jihah* of the Kaaba applies strictly to individuals who are in proximity to the Kaaba and are able to see it directly, allowing them to orient themselves towards it with certainty during prayer. Conversely, for individuals who are unable to see the Kaaba, such as those situated at considerable distances, it is deemed sufficient to merely face the *jihah* of the Kaaba, without the requirement of pinpointing its *'ayn* of the Kaaba. This position is grounded in the Qur'anic verse: "*Fa walli wajhaka shatra al-masjid al-ḥarām*" (Q. 2:144), which means "So turn your face towards al-Masjid al-Ḥarām." Significantly, the verse uses the term '*al-masjid al-ḥarām*' (the Sacred Mosque) rather than *al-Ka'bah*, thereby implying the permissibility of facing the general area rather than the precise structure itself (Al-'Asqalani, 1993).

Therefore, Ḥanafī scholars hold the view that individuals who are unable to see the Kaaba directly may validly perform their prayers while facing any direction

that falls within the general boundary of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, as such an orientation is considered sufficient to fulfil the divine command expressed in the aforementioned verse. Moreover, in the same verse, the term ‘*shatrah*’, which denotes "direction," is interpreted as an indication of the obligation to face the general direction of the Kaaba, rather than a strict requirement to face the Kaaba itself with precision. This linguistic nuance supports the position that facing the broader orientation of the Kaaba is adequate for fulfilling the obligation of qibla for those situated beyond visual range of the Sacred Mosque (Al-Zuhaili, 1985).

Meanwhile, scholars of the Shāfi‘ī school stated that it is obligatory for both those who can see the Kaaba and those who cannot face the ‘*ayn* of the Kaaba during prayer. This position is grounded in the Qur’anic verse “*fa walli wajhaka shatrah al-masjid al-ḥarām*” (Q. 2:144. The Shāfi‘ī school interprets this verse as a direct command obligating every person performing prayer to face precisely the ‘*ayn* of the Kaaba, not merely its general direction. They maintain that the wording of the verse signifies a legal imperative to orient oneself exactly towards the Kaaba rather than toward its surrounding region. In summary, the Shāfi‘ī school outlines three distinct methods for determining the qibla, based on a person’s location and capacity to ascertain the Kaaba’s direction. Firstly, for those who can directly see the structure of the Kaaba, such as individuals inside or near the Masjid al-Ḥarām, it is obligatory to face the ‘*ayn* of the Kaaba. Secondly, for those in the vicinity of the Masjid al-Ḥarām who cannot see the Kaaba directly, they are to rely on strong presumption (based on direction and landmarks) and face the Kaaba as precisely as possible. Thirdly, for those at a great distance such as individuals residing in regions like Malaysia facing the direction of Mecca with the intention of facing the Kaaba is sufficient, provided it is done with sincere effort and confidence in one’s orientation (Al-Zuhaili, 1985).

3.3 Justification for Differences in Opinions Regarding the Qibla Deviation Limit

Firstly, returning to the original scope of the study by examining the arguments presented by the Fatwa Council of Malaysia and the Dar al-Ifta’ of Egypt regarding the permissible qibla deviation limit, it can be concluded based on the perspectives of both fatwa bodies, as summarized in the table below:

Table 2. Comparative Analysis of Qibla Deviation Fatwas by the Fatwa Council of Malaysia and Dar al-Ifta’ of Egypt

Aspect	Fatwa Council of Malaysia (MKI / State Fatwa)	Dār al-Iftā’ al-Miṣriyyah (Egypt)
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Committees)	
Common Ground	Both authorities affirm that facing the qibla (istiqbāl al-qiblah) is a sharṭ ṣiḥḥah as-salah (condition for the validity) of ṣalāh.
Nature of Ruling	Administrative / technical guideline: a ± 3 degrees tolerance established through the 79th MKI Muzakarah (2007) to ensure consistency in mosque design and orientation.
Scope of Application	Juridical / fiqh-based fatwa recognises jihah al-Ka‘bah (general direction) as sufficient for prayer validity, particularly for existing mosques. Applies primarily to new mosque construction and existing constructed mosque. Not directed at individual worshippers.
Underlying Principle	Emphasises legal sufficiency (<i>jihah</i>) and maslahah / rukhsah (public benefit and concession).
Interpretation of Deviation	Emphasises technical precision and standardisation (scientific and geodetic alignment). The reference to 90 degree (45 degree each side) is a validity boundary, not a permissible target deviation.
Contextual Factors	The 3-degree value is a construction tolerance, not a religious validity limit. Malaysia’s modern surveying infrastructure allows precise qibla determination; hence minimal deviation is achievable.
Advantages	Many historical mosques predate modern instruments; fiqh leniency preserves heritage and avoids hardship.
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures national uniformity in mosque orientation • Strengthens alignment between religious and technical authorities. • Provides flexibility for older mosques. • Preserves heritage and maintains community cohesion. • Technical precision may be mistaken for fiqh obligation. • May require costly structural corrections. • Wide interpretive tolerance may cause inconsistent orientations. • Potential public misunderstanding of ± 45 degree as a “permitted angle.”

In the context of Malaysia, the maximum permissible qibla deviation limit is set at 3° and 45° for only Perlis. This has led to the positive outcome that most older mosques in Malaysia have only minimal deviations from the true qibla direction, with few mosques being significantly misaligned, as many have already had their qibla realigned. Therefore, the application of the 3-degree deviation limit does not pose a significant issue when practiced in this country. Below are some studies conducted in the older mosques around Melaka:

(Ahmad et al., 2021)

Table 3. Qibla Deviation in Selected Heritage Mosques in Melaka

No.	Mosque & Its Age	True Qibla Direction	Original Qibla Direction	Value of Qibla Azimuth Deviation
1.	Mosque Imam Al Ghazali, Bakar Batu Bachang (123 years)	292° 52' 19"	289° 47' 47"	03° 04' 32"
2.	Mosque Lama Kg. Parit Melana (99 years)	292° 48' 37"	296° 34' 10"	03 °45' 33"
3.	Mosque Bukit China (148 years)	292° 52' 40"	289° 01' 28"	03° 51' 12"
4.	Mosque As-Salihin Paya Rumpit (110 years)	292° 50' 20"	288° 15' 25"	04 °34' 55"
5.	Mosque Al-Khairiyah, Telok Mas (187 years)	292° 52' 50"	287° 45' 51"	05° 06' 59"

In contrast, the Dar al-Ifta' of Egypt adheres to a maximum qibla deviation limit of 45°. (Mustafa, 2019) From a historical perspective, Egypt is one of the oldest countries in the world, with a deep-rooted Islamic heritage dating back to the early periods of Islam. The construction of mosques in Egypt, which dates back to the time of the Companions of the Prophet (Sahabah), has resulted in mosques that are centuries, or even millennia, old. Historically, the lack of advanced technological tools for accurately determining the qibla direction meant that many of Egypt's older mosques exhibit much larger deviations compared to the older mosques in Malaysia. (Schumm, 2020)

Table 4. Qibla Deviation in Selected Historical Mosques in Egypt

No.	Mosque & Its Age (Approx.)	True Qibla Direction	Original Qibla Direction	Value of Qibla Azimuth Deviation
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1.	Mosque Amru bin Al-As (1384 years)	135° 02' 00"	127° 00' 00"	08° 02' 00"
2.	Mosque Al-Azhar (1055 years)	135° 01' 30"	140° 00' 00"	04° 58' 30"
3.	Mosque Ibn Tulun (1146 years)	135° 00' 45"	115° 00' 00"	20° 00' 45"
4.	Mosque Al-Hakim bi Amrillah (1035 years)	135° 02' 15"	120° 00' 00"	15° 02' 15"
5.	Mosque Sayyida Nafisa (925 years)	135° 01' 00"	145° 00' 00"	9° 59' 00"
6.	Mosque Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (1165 years)	135° 02' 45"	110° 00' 00"	25° 02' 45"
7.	Mosque Al-Muayyad Syeikh (600 years)	135° 02' 00"	120° 00' 00"	15° 02' 00"
8.	Mosque Al-Salih Tala'i (865 years)	135° 00' 00"	110° 00' 00"	25° 00' 00"

Meanwhile, the 3 degrees guideline provides the advantage of ensuring greater certainty and consistency in the orientation of mosques and musollas toward the qibla. The establishment of this limit is regarded as a precautionary (*iḥtiyāṭī*) measure, introduced to uphold the integrity and uniformity of prayer direction across Malaysia. This approach reflects a cautious and preventive attitude (*siyāsah iḥtiyāṭiyyah*), reducing the risk of significant deviation from the true qibla and thus strengthening confidence that congregational prayers are properly aligned. However, the 3° limit functions as an administrative and engineering tolerance for building design and institutional alignment, and reference for personal obligation for every worshipper to verify the qibla direction to that exact precision. Its rigidity may nonetheless appear restrictive in certain contexts, such as in older mosques or informal prayer spaces, where practical realignment is difficult. In such cases, religious authorities typically prioritize correction through institutional procedures, not individual enforcement, ensuring that technical precision complements, rather than burdens, the religious duty of facing the qibla.

In *Dār al-Iftā' al-Miṣriyyah's* interpretation, this ḥadīth establishes the validity of prayer (*ṣiḥḥah*) for anyone facing the general direction of the Ka'bah (*jihah*

al-Ka'bah), especially for those distant from Mecca or lacking precise instruments. The expression of a “broad range” is conceptual, not a numerical allowance; it reflects tolerance of validity, not a measurable limit for orientation or construction. Thus, worshippers remain obligated to exert reasonable effort (*ijtihad*) to determine the most accurate qibla direction attainable (*ghalabat al-zann*). The flexibility serves the principle of *maṣlaḥah* (public benefit) by removing undue hardship, while still preserving the obligation to orient oneself as accurately as possible. The drawback of this approach lies not in the *ḥadīth* itself, but in public misunderstanding, some may perceive the wide validity range as permission to neglect accuracy. In reality, *Dār al-Iftā'* continues to instruct that precision should be pursued whenever possible, while recognizing that minor deviation does not invalidate prayer.

From a historical perspective, the number of old mosques in Malaysia with significant qibla deviation is minor compared to those in Egypt. This is intricately linked to the later arrival of Islam in the Malay Peninsula, during which the religion had not yet been widely disseminated. While there are instances of old mosques in Malaysia, such as Masjid Kampung Laut (15th CE), Masjid Kampung Hulu (18th CE), and Masjid Kampung Kling (18th CE) that were once significantly misaligned from the Kaaba (as shown in Table 4), has been realigned towards accurate Qibla direction using modern surveying technique (Abu Hasan, 2023).

In contrast, Egypt is home to numerous historical mosques dating back to the early Islamic centuries, including some from the era of the Prophet's Companions. Understandably, many of these structures exhibit noticeable qibla deviations, reflecting the limited precision of early measurement techniques rather than error in intention. If Egypt were to impose Malaysia's strict 3 degrees construction guideline, it would create practical and social difficulties, necessitate costly realignments and potentially disrupt long-established community mosques. However, it is important to emphasize that past prayers remain valid so long as they were performed based on the best available knowledge and sincere effort (*ijtihad wa ghalabat al-zann*) at the time. Later discovery of a misalignment does not retroactively invalidate those prayers, as confirmed by classical *fiqh* consensus (*ijmā'*).

3.4 Formulation of New Fatwa on Mosque Qibla Deviation

Wherever possible, the qibla direction should be determined with the highest attainable accuracy during the planning and construction of mosques or prayer space. This process should begin at the architectural design stage and continue throughout construction, with verification by the site engineer, quantity surveyor, and contractor. All technical personnel bear the

responsibility to ensure that the mihrāb axis aligns correctly with the true qibla azimuth, based on reliable geographical coordinates and astronomical methods (*‘ilm al-falak*). However, the emphasis on precision in this context functions as a technical and administrative guideline, not as a religious obligation upon individuals. In *fiqh*, the duty is to face the qibla to the best of one’s ability (*ghalabat al-zann*), not necessarily to achieve instrument-level exactness. Thus, while engineering accuracy supports the institutional integrity of mosque design, it complements rather than replaces the legal sufficiency of striving for the correct direction in worship. This approach aligns with the ḥadīth of Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh (may Allah be pleased with him), who reported that the Prophet ﷺ would pray on his camel facing its direction while travelling, but would dismount and face the qibla when performing obligatory prayer (al-Bukhārī). This demonstrates that facing the qibla is obligatory, while the level of attainable precision varies according to circumstance and capacity.

Although several classical *madhāhib* (legal schools) permitted considerable deviations in qibla orientation, particularly for those living far from the Ka‘bah, such leniencies arose from the technological limitations and practical challenges of earlier periods. These included the absence of accurate instruments and the difficulty of establishing direction across vast or unfamiliar regions. In the modern context, the availability of technologies such as GPS, smartphone applications, and satellite mapping has enhanced the ease, speed, and precision of qibla determination. However, this does not completely remove the applicability of legal concessions (*rukhaṣ*), since hardship (*mashaqqah*) and limited access (*ta‘azzur al-dabt*) may still occur in certain circumstances, such as in remote rural areas, prisons, at sea or in air travel, or during natural disasters where instruments fail or are unavailable.

Islamic legal theory provides several *qawā‘id fiqhiyyah* (legal maxims) that balance obligation and concession. Among them:

3.4.1 *Legal Maxim 1: “المشقة تجلب التيسير” (al-mashaqqah tajlib al-taysir) , “Hardship Begets Ease.”*

This maxim affirms that when an individual faces genuine and unavoidable difficulty in fulfilling a religious duty, the Sharī‘ah provides leniency to prevent harm or undue burden. However, this principle is conditional upon the presence of real hardship (*mashaqqah ‘ādiyyah ghayr muḥtamal*) and applies contextually to individuals or groups. When accurate and accessible means exist, one should employ them to fulfil the obligation with diligence (*iḥtiyāt*), but where such means are unavailable, *rukhsah* remains valid. Thus, the modern era enhances the capacity for qibla precision but does not abolish the juristic compassion built into the law. Given that modern

technologies now enable precise and accessible qibla determination, the original *reasons* for widespread leniency in earlier centuries, such as measurement difficulty or lack of reliable instruments, have diminished. Nevertheless, these *fiqh* principles are not revoked, but rather contextually reinterpreted to suit present capacities.

In this sense, the pursuit of precision in qibla determination represents a commendable application of diligence (*iḥtiyāt*) and serves the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah (objectives of Islamic law) by ensuring unity, confidence, and consistency in worship. It does not negate the validity of prayers performed under earlier or less precise circumstances, which remain valid when based on sincere effort (*ijtihād*) and best available knowledge (*ghalabat al-zann*). In the contemporary context, the use of modern measuring instruments and geospatial technologies is not merely permissible but strongly encouraged to ensure the validity and accuracy of Qibla direction, especially in the construction of mosques and permanent prayer spaces. Recommended technologies and instruments include:

- a) High-precision GPS (with sub-meter error margins), for determining the exact coordinates of the construction site;
- b) Theodolites and total stations, used by licensed surveyors to accurately calculate the azimuth of the qibla based on geodetic methods;
- c) Satellite imagery and remote sensing technologies, which assist in aligning building orientation relative to Earth's surface;
- d) Astronomical software such as *Stellarium*, *Google Earth Pro*, *SkyMap*, and *SunCalc*, which compute the qibla azimuth precisely using the user's geographic coordinates and the Kaaba's location.

3.4.2 *The permissibility of using modern technology qiyās (legal analogy)*

These tools minimise directional deviation and allow for scientifically verifiable results that can be audited by professionals including engineers, surveyors, and Islamic astronomy experts. The permissibility of using modern technology for qibla determination can be supported through *qiyās* (legal analogy), drawing on the widely accepted applications of technology in two other areas of *'ibādah falakiyyah* (astronomical acts of worship): the determination of prayer times and the start of Hijri lunar months.

First, in the domain of prayer time calculations, most Muslim-majority countries, including Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia, now utilise astronomical software such as *Skyfield*, *PyEphem*, and *Winhisab* to automatically compute prayer times based on the position of the sun and the user's geographic coordinates. These applications are integrated into smartphone

apps, official websites of religious authorities, and printed prayer timetables. While traditional methods relied on visual solar observations, contemporary software is accepted because it delivers a high degree of *yaqīn* (certainty), consistency, and verifiability. Its usage is endorsed by scholars on the grounds that it aligns with *maqāṣid al-shari'ah*, particularly precision, ease of use, and the preservation of communal worship. (Al-Qaradawi, 2005)

Second, in the context of determining the beginning of Hijri months, especially Ramadan and Shawwal, technology is also widely accepted by fatwa institutions and official *falak* departments. Countries such as Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia integrate *rukayah* (visual moon sighting) with modern technologies, including automated telescopes, CCD (charge-coupled device) cameras, and lunar image-processing software. These tools enhance the visibility of the *hilāl* (crescent moon), especially under challenging weather conditions or complex observational settings. Importantly, technology does not replace *rukayah* but reinforces it in accordance with the principle of *tahqīq al-ru'yah* (verification of sighting). Contemporary scholars have affirmed this approach as it does not contradict scriptural evidence and improves reliability, reducing disputes over lunar visibility (Nawawi et al., 2020; Subki, 1992).

These two examples demonstrate that the use of technology in *'ibādah falakiyyah* has been legally validated through *ijtihād*, *qiyās*, and *maqāṣid*-based reasoning. Therefore, the adoption of modern technologies in determining the qibla should be held to the same standard, not merely permitted but encouraged, as a means to uphold precision and certainty in fulfilling a core pillar of prayer. Rejecting technology in this context is inconsistent with current realities and contrary to the spirit of *tajdīd* (renewal) and contextual *ijtihād* within Islamic legal thought. The formulation of a fatwa, particularly concerning the determination of the qibla direction, cannot be made in a generalised manner without taking into account the specific realities of each country. Every nation has its own unique historical, social, and infrastructural context; therefore, localised *ijtihād* based on *al-maṣlahah al-'āmmah* should be prioritised.

For instance, in countries that contain numerous historical mosques or heritage buildings constructed before the advent of modern surveying instruments, where noticeable qibla deviation exists, it may be more appropriate to adopt a juristic approach similar to that of Egypt's Dār al-Iftā'. This approach does not prescribe a fixed ± 45 degree construction margin from the true qibla azimuth but recognises a juridical range of validity within the principle of *jihad al-Ka'bah*. Within this framework, prayers performed in such mosques remain valid, provided they face the general qibla direction as established historically, even if subsequent measurements reveal some deviation. The rationale for maintaining these orientations is grounded in *maṣlahah* and the *maqāṣid al-*

sharī'ahm which prioritise communal unity, continuity in worship, and preservation of religious heritage over the potential disruption that would result from structural alterations or reorientation of long-established mosques.

Conversely, in countries that are actively constructing new mosques, and that possess technical capabilities, expertise in geodesy and Islamic astronomy, as well as an elevated level of public awareness concerning the importance of directional precision, a stricter approach is more appropriate. This is reflected in the position of Malaysia's National Fatwa Council, who stipulate that the maximum allowable deviation is 3° from the true qibla azimuth. This approach emphasises the principle of precision (*'ayn al-ka'bah*), which becomes a Shariah guideline when technical capability is readily available.

In addition, the social context and the degree of *madhhab* acceptance must be carefully assessed in the process of formulating fatwas on qibla direction. Each community has a different background in religious understanding and *madhhab* inclination. If a particular society is not yet prepared to embrace alternative *madhhab* approaches, or if sensitivities exist regarding differing scholarly opinions, then a fatwa that is overly rigid, without a wise and diplomatic approach, may trigger communal tension. This may lead to the rejection of the prescribed qibla direction and, more worryingly, division among congregants. Such outcomes undermine the fundamental role of the mosque as a centre of unity and harmony for the Muslim community.

For example, the state of Perlis has opted to follow the fatwa approach of Egypt's *Dar al-Ifta'*, which permits a deviation in qibla direction of up to ±45 degree for constructed mosque. However, situation in state of Perlis does not have the same context in comparison to Egypt. This is because Perlis does not have a number of historic mosques that constructed using traditional surveying technique. The oldest mosque in Perlis is Masjid Alwi Kangar, which dated 1933. This mosque supposed to have accurate alignment of Qibla direction since it is constructed using modern technique. In contrast, the among oldest mosque in Egypt are Mosque of 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ, constructed on 641–642 CE, Mosque of Ahmad Ibn Tūlūn, constructed on 876 – 879 CE, and Al-Azhar Mosque founded around 972 CE. These mosques are constructed using medieval tool, which make the alignment of the mosque deviate a few degrees from Qibla direction. This deviation of old historic mosque make the Darul Ifta fatwa of applicable to Egypt, however the fatwa of Darul Ifta' is not applicable to Perlis state. The application of of *maslahah* and the flexibility found within the Hanafi school of thought, is not suitable to be adopted for mosque permitted deviation in Perlis, because most of the mosques in Perlis is constructed accurately using modern tool.

In contrast, Sarawak has chosen to follow the ruling of Malaysia's National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs, which limits qibla deviation to no more than 3 degrees, in accordance with the Shāfi'ī school and the technical standards set by the Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia (JUPEM). This decision reflects the important level of social consensus and adherence to national religious authority among the Muslim community in Sarawak. Both approaches illustrate that a fatwa must not only be sound from a *sharī'ah* perspective but also appropriate to the societal context in which it will be received and implemented. Therefore, social conditions and the level of *madhhab* acceptance are crucial elements to ensure that a fatwa can be understood, accepted, and practised harmoniously by the local Muslim community. Finally, consideration must also be given to the level of technology readiness and technology acceptance within society. In communities where such levels remain low, such as in rural areas or developing countries, a more lenient *ijtihad*, may be more practical for the time being. Conversely, in urban communities that are technologically literate, the precision of the qibla direction should be regarded as a basic guideline standard in mosque development, to be upheld from the design phase through to construction.

For individual qibla determination, the determination is based on their own capability in uplifting the hardship (*mashaqqah*) in finding the accurate determination of Qibla direction. Currently, an accurate Qibla determination can be performed using any mobile phone with internet penetration. Based on research conducted by Umar et al., (2025), the highest compass deviation for qibla determination performed by any mobile phone is at 15 degree deviation, however, when using sun position to assist qibla determination, all mobile phone has zero degree of deviation. This means that, to accurately determine qibla direction at 3 degrees of deviation, can be conducted any mobile phone with internet penetration, which can download sun position data. Therefore, this boils down the definition of hardship are applicable for those who does not have access to mobile phone with internet access. For this situation, the angle of deviation for Qibla determination is permission for up to 45 degrees, as long as is within the range of jihah Qibla. However, individuals that are capable of using mobile phones, which has internet access, should be able to accurately determine the direction of Qibla within 3 degrees of deviation, when assisted by sun position qibla determining app, like Easy Qibla.

Hence, the formulation of a fatwa concerning the permissible deviation in qibla direction must be principled yet flexible, grounded in scientific data, social realities, and the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. Only then can such a fatwa effectively resolve issues while preserving communal harmony among Muslims. The proposed fatwa framework emphasizes that the precise determination of qibla is no longer a matter of theoretical preference, but a *sharī'ah* guideline that

must align with modern technological capabilities. The framework calls for a tiered, context-sensitive approach, combining classical legal principles with empirical astronomical accuracy. This nuanced model is designed to be scalable and applicable across diverse Muslim-majority societies with varying levels of technological readiness, jurisprudential schools, and sociocultural norms.

The framework recommends the following multi-level implementation model:

Table 5. Contextual Guidelines for Recommended Qibla Deviation Limits Based on Setting and Jurisprudential Basis

Context	Recommended Qibla Deviation	Basis
New mosque construction	$\leq 3^\circ$	Availability of geospatial tools and expert support
Old heritage mosques	Tolerant (up to $\pm 45^\circ$)	Maslahah, social stability, historical value
Individual prayer (no tools)	$\leq 3^\circ$ for those who have technological readiness and awareness, Up to $\pm 45^\circ$ for those who do not	Necessity, and hardship removal
Urban/technologically ready areas	$\leq 3^\circ$	Maqāṣid-based precision and accessibility
Cases by Cases study	Up to $\pm 45^\circ$	Depending on Societal and Cultural Context

This model does not impose a one-size-fits-all standard but promotes tiered precision which encouraging high accuracy when feasible and accepting broader leniency where necessary, grounded in the maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah principle of *ease and non-hardship*. This framework has clear transnational applicability and can serve as a benchmark for harmonization of qibla fatwas across Muslim-majority nations. In a global context, this proposed fatwa framework has the potential to be widely applied across various regions of the Muslim world. At the ASEAN level, particularly among MABIMS member countries such as Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, this framework could serve as a foundation for the harmonization of qibla direction guidelines, while still respecting the individual national fatwa structures.

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, it could facilitate the development of joint protocols between countries that adopt stricter approaches, such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and those with more flexible interpretations, like Egypt and Morocco. This, in turn, could help reduce inconsistencies in the implementation of fatwas related to qibla direction.

Meanwhile, in the context of Muslim minorities in Europe and North America, this framework could provide structured and globally recognized fatwa guidelines for Islamic centers and diaspora communities, particularly in the construction of new mosques or the realignment of qibla in public prayer spaces. The model fosters unity (*waḥdah al-ummah*) while embracing diversity in *fiqh* methodologies. It offers flexibility without undermining legal certainty (*yaqīn*) or ritual integrity (*iḥkām al-ʿibādāt*). Given the increasing standardization of Islamic worship infrastructure, especially in the design of global Islamic centers, airports, hotels, and public prayer facilities, there is a need for international technical and legal guidelines. One of the key measures proposed to strengthen this fatwa framework at the international level is the establishment of a Global Qibla Standards Committee under the auspices of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). This committee should comprise experts in the fields of Islamic astronomy, Islamic legal theory, engineering, and heritage studies to ensure a holistic and inclusive approach in formulating universally accepted qibla direction guidelines that are both Shariah-compliant and scientifically sound.

In addition, an internationally recognized guideline, similar to ISO standards, should be developed specifically for qibla alignment in mosque architecture. This guideline must include protocols for azimuth calculation based on geographic coordinates, acceptable angular error margins, a list of tools and verification methods such as GPS, theodolites, solar positioning, and satellite imagery, procedures for the realignment of existing mosques, as well as a certification framework for qibla compliance in Islamic places of worship. Furthermore, this proposal also includes the establishment of a Unified Qibla Reference System, an international azimuth mapping database accessible to surveyors, developers, and religious authorities. This system will be integrated with Geographic Information System (GIS) technology for mosque planning purposes, thereby enabling systematic, accurate, and Shariah-compliant qibla realignment across the Muslim world. Such an initiative would not only enhance religious confidence and standardization but would also empower global Islamic architecture with shariʿah-compliant engineering practices, preserving both ritual integrity and spiritual unity across the Muslim world.

In summary, the proposed fatwa framework is not limited to academic discourse but offers direct practical utility in guiding mosque development, religious rulings, and public practice. It integrates Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic astronomy approach, and contemporary technological realities into a coherent, shariʿah-compliant model. The framework promotes fatwa harmonization, especially in pluralistic or federal systems, while offering a blueprint for international qibla alignment standards. Its balanced approach, anchored in precision, *maslahah*, and context, positions itself as a viable and

scalable solution to unify qibla-related practices worldwide without compromising doctrinal integrity.

4. CONCLUSION

The determination of the permissible range of qibla deviation in Malaysia and Egypt has been examined in this study with the aim of understanding the methodological approaches, principles of Islamic jurisprudence, and their respective implementations. The findings indicate that public comprehension plays a significant role in shaping the procedures for qibla determination in both contexts. In particular, the clarity and accessibility of fatwa rulings influence the ease with which laypersons are able to align themselves accurately during prayer. One notable disparity between the two countries is that while Egypt has officially issued a fatwa allowing a permissible deviation of up to 45° for individuals performing prayer, Malaysia's guidelines merely specify a deviation limit of 3° , and this only in the context of mosque construction, not individual prayer alignment. This limited scope has potential to cause confusion among the public, especially in situations where precise orientation is not possible.

Harmonizing this aspect of qibla determination could benefit from policy-level initiatives, such as Malaysia adopting a similar position to Egypt by issuing an explicit fatwa allowing a wider range of individual qibla deviation. Such alignment would not only ease public concern but also reflect the broader juristic principle of *taysir* (facilitation) within Islamic law when exactitude is difficult to achieve. Future fatwa deliberations in Malaysia might therefore consider addressing this gap in religious guidance to promote greater clarity and consistency in qibla-related practices across the Muslim world. The research questions formulated in this study have been adequately addressed. Firstly, the study clarified the concept of qibla determination from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence and astronomy. Secondly, it examined the methods employed in determining the Qibla direction based on both Islamic jurisprudence and astronomical principles. Lastly, the study investigated the differences in the permissible range of qibla deviation between Dar al-Ifta' of Egypt and Malaysia, highlighting the distinct methodological approaches adopted by each country in regulating and guiding qibla orientation practices.

The study on the determination of the permissible qibla deviation in Malaysia and Egypt holds significant value for various stakeholders. The findings contribute meaningfully to academic discourse and religious practice in both countries. This research addresses a critical gap in the existing literature by offering a comparative analysis of the allowable qibla deviation limits as adopted in Malaysia and Egypt. Previous studies have focused on individual

national contexts, with limited cross-country comparative examination. The outcomes of this study can inform the development of practical tools and structured frameworks for accurate qibla determination, benefiting religious authorities, scholars, and the general public. This includes the production of educational materials and digital applications that adhere to standardized criteria, thereby supporting more consistent and accessible religious practices.

One of the limitations of this study lies in its reliance on literature review, particularly concerning data from Egypt, which may lack empirical support from direct observations or field-based evidence. The literature on qibla determination practices in Egypt is notably limited, with only a single identified study available, which could potentially affect the balance and depth of the comparative analysis. Addressing this limitation in future research and expanding the empirical base, especially through interviews, fieldwork, and institutional documentation would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of qibla determination practices. Such efforts would also support greater harmonization and standardization in qibla orientation methodologies, benefiting Muslim communities both regionally and globally.

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