

## Religious Justice's Role: Contemporary Issues and Legal Evolution

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the existence and development of Religious Courts in Indonesia which play an important role in handling Islamic law issues, such as marriage, inheritance, and other civil cases. From the time of the Islamic kingdom to the modern era, the Religious Court has had a strategic position in the life of the Muslim community. However, in its journey, this institution faced various challenges, both during the colonial period and after Indonesia's independence, especially related to authority and adjustments to the national legal system. This research aims to examine the role, challenges, and development of Religious Courts within the framework of Indonesia's national legal system. The method used is a literature study with a qualitative approach through various trusted sources, namely books, scientific journal articles, legal documents, and relevant previous research. The results of the study show that although the Religious Courts have made significant progress, the issue of legal integration and modernization demands still needs serious attention. Religious justice remains an important pillar in realizing justice for the Muslim community, but it requires stronger synergy with the national legal system and policies that are responsive to the challenges of the times.

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini membahas keberadaan dan perkembangan Peradilan Agama di Indonesia yang berperan penting dalam menangani persoalan hukum Islam, seperti perkawinan, warisan, dan perkara perdata lainnya. Sejak masa kerajaan Islam hingga era modern, Peradilan Agama memiliki posisi strategis dalam kehidupan masyarakat Muslim. Namun, dalam perjalanannya, lembaga ini menghadapi berbagai tantangan, baik pada masa penjajahan maupun setelah Indonesia merdeka, terutama terkait kewenangan dan penyesuaian dengan sistem hukum nasional. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran, tantangan, dan perkembangan Peradilan Agama dalam kerangka sistem hukum nasional Indonesia. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan kualitatif melalui berbagai sumber terpercaya, yaitu buku, artikel jurnal ilmiah, dokumen perundang-undangan, serta penelitian terdahulu yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun Peradilan Agama telah mengalami kemajuan yang signifikan, persoalan integrasi hukum dan tuntutan modernisasi masih perlu mendapat perhatian serius. Peradilan Agama tetap menjadi pilar penting dalam mewujudkan keadilan bagi masyarakat Muslim, namun memerlukan sinergi yang lebih kuat dengan sistem hukum nasional serta kebijakan yang responsif terhadap tantangan zaman.

**Keywords:** Religious Courts, Islamic Law, Legal Systems





## Introduction

The Religious Courts of Indonesia constitute one of the oldest and most enduring legal institutions within the country's Islamic legal tradition (Abdul Ali Mutammima Amar Alhaq et al., 2025). Historically rooted in the development of Muslim communities since the era of Islamic kingdoms, these courts have remained a primary forum for resolving family and civil disputes governed by Islamic law, particularly marriage, divorce, and inheritance matters. Their continued relevance reflects not merely institutional survival, but also social legitimacy, as they are perceived by many Muslims as a legal forum that is both accessible and closely aligned with religious values (Azzahra & Shuaib, 2022). Over time, however, the role of the Religious Courts has expanded beyond their classical function. Legal modernization, changing family structures, increasing dispute complexity, and broader social transformation have required the courts to respond to new forms of legal contestation and administrative demands. In this context, the Religious Courts are no longer seen solely as a venue for personal-status adjudication, but as an important component of the national legal system whose function must be assessed in light of contemporary judicial reform and legal pluralism (Karmawan, 2020).

From a historical perspective, the existence of Religious Courts has been shaped by shifting political and legal regimes (Sumanto et al., 2021). During the colonial period, their authority was restricted through legal policies that weakened their jurisdiction and institutional autonomy, while the post-independence era gradually restored and strengthened their position within the Indonesian judiciary (Haetami, 2019). The adoption of the one-roof judicial system and subsequent legislative reforms marked a significant milestone in consolidating their status as an independent court under the Supreme Court, thereby reinforcing their formal equality with other judicial institutions. Despite this normative strengthening, the practical operation of the Religious Courts continues to face substantial challenges (Cahyani, 2019). Contemporary studies indicate that the courts must adapt to digital transformation, uneven technological infrastructure, differing legal interpretations, social resistance, and growing demands for more efficient and equitable access to justice. These pressures suggest that the institutional development of the Religious Courts is not a completed process, but an ongoing negotiation between Islamic legal principles, state law, and evolving social realities.

Previous scholarship has examined the Religious Courts from historical (Halimi, 2024), doctrinal (Setyawan et al., 2024), comparative (Kirunda et al., 2025), and socio-legal perspectives (Susylawati et al., 2025). The historical highlighted trajectory of Islamic inheritance law and the impact of colonial reception theory on the marginalization of Religious Courts, while emphasized the socio-historical convergence between Islamic and civil legal orders in contemporary Indonesia (Lathifah et al., 2025). Further, the integration of Islamic legal principles into the national legal system is advancing gradually, yet remains constrained by interpretive inconsistency and implementation barriers (Badrun Taman et al., 2025). Nevertheless, these studies tend to address discrete dimensions separately, leaving the broader institutional dynamics of Religious Courts underexplored. Accordingly, there remains a need for a more integrated analysis that examines the existence, role, contemporary challenges, and future direction of the Religious Courts within Indonesia's national legal system. This study addresses that gap through a literature-based inquiry that synthesizes legislation, scholarly writings, and previous empirical findings. By doing so, it seeks to clarify the strategic position of the Religious Courts, identify the principal obstacles they face, and outline their developmental trajectory in a manner that contributes to both Islamic legal scholarship and national legal reform.

## Literature Review

Existing scholarship on Religious Courts in Indonesia demonstrates that this institution occupies a significant position in the development of Islamic law within the national legal system. Historically, Religious Courts have been closely linked to the institutionalization of Islamic legal norms, particularly in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, waqf, and, more recently, Islamic economic disputes (Khairuddin & Fautanu, 2021). Their evolution reflects not only doctrinal developments within Islamic jurisprudence but also broader transformations in the political and constitutional structure of the Indonesian legal order. Several studies show that the authority of Religious Courts has undergone substantial change across different historical periods. During the colonial era, the application of the *receptie* theory contributed to the marginalization of Islamic legal institutions and limited the scope of Religious Courts (Zayyadi et al., 2023). In the post-independence period, especially after legal and judicial reform, the position of these courts gradually strengthened. The one-roof system marked an important turning point by placing Religious Courts under the direct supervision of the Supreme Court, thereby reinforcing their independence and institutional equality with other judicial bodies. This reform also improved administrative coherence, judicial professionalism, and procedural consistency across Indonesia.

Another important strand of literature emphasizes the relationship between Islamic law and national law. Rather than existing in opposition, the two systems are increasingly understood as interacting frameworks that coexist within Indonesia's plural legal structure (Fauzi, 2022). Religious Courts serve as a formal mechanism through which Islamic law is recognized, interpreted, and applied within state institutions. This arrangement illustrates a model of legal accommodation in which Islamic legal principles are integrated into national law without eliminating the authority of state legal structures. As a result, Religious Courts function as both religious and constitutional institutions, bridging normative Islamic values and modern legal governance (Muhamad Shadiq et al., 2024). Recent studies also indicate that the scope of Religious Courts has expanded beyond classical family law to include sharia economic disputes (Iswanto & Hadinatha, 2023). This development reflects the growing relevance of Islamic finance and the need for specialized judicial mechanisms capable of handling complex commercial issues grounded in sharia principles. At the same time, scholars note that the expansion of jurisdiction has not fully resolved practical challenges. Differences in interpretation, uneven institutional capacity, and procedural limitations continue to affect the consistency and effectiveness of judicial outcomes (Bustomi, 2024). These issues suggest that formal legal reform must be accompanied by institutional strengthening and judicial harmonization.

In addition, the literature reveals that the procedural law governing Religious Courts still retains several features derived from the general civil judicial system. This condition has generated debate regarding whether procedural rules in Religious Courts are fully aligned with the philosophical foundations of Islamic substantive law. Some scholars argue that this mismatch creates normative tension and limits the distinctiveness of Religious Courts as Islamic judicial institutions. Others view it as a pragmatic necessity within a unified national legal system. This debate remains central to discussions about the future reform of Islamic judicial procedure in Indonesia. Overall, the literature suggests that Religious Courts have evolved from marginalized colonial-era institutions into constitutionally recognized judicial bodies with expanding authority. However, further research is still needed to examine how these courts can better respond to contemporary legal pluralism, procedural reform, and the increasing complexity of Islamic legal disputes in modern Indonesia.

## Method

This article uses a library research design to examine the Religious Courts as a legal institution within Indonesia's national legal system. The approach is suitable because the study focuses on legal norms, historical development, institutional transformation, and scholarly interpretation rather than empirical field data. The study relies on secondary sources, including books, peer-reviewed journal articles, legal regulations, judicial documents, and previous studies relevant to Islamic law and Religious Courts in

Indonesia. Source selection is guided by relevance to the research theme, with attention to historical, juridical, and socio-legal discussions. Data collection is conducted through systematic literature searching, reading, classification, and organization of materials according to thematic relevance. The collected sources are grouped into several main categories, they are the historical development of Religious Courts, their juridical basis, their institutional position in the national legal system, and the contemporary challenges they face.

The analysis uses qualitative content analysis to identify key concepts, patterns, and themes across the literature. This method allows the researcher to interpret how the Religious Courts are described in relation to Islamic law, state law, and social change. It also helps reveal the continuity and transformation of their role in the Indonesian legal order. To ensure analytical rigor, the study compares different sources in terms of argument consistency, relevance, and contribution to the topic. This comparative process is used to strengthen interpretation and reduce fragmentation in the discussion. Recent literature is given particular attention so that the analysis reflects current debates on legal modernization, digital transformation, and access to justice. Through this method, the article aims to produce a coherent and comprehensive understanding of the Religious Courts as a dynamic institution. The approach is intended to explain how they adapt to contemporary legal challenges while continuing to contribute to the development of Indonesia's national legal system.

## Results and Discussion

### Historical Foundations and Institutional Trajectory of the Religious Courts in Indonesia

The Religious Courts in Indonesia are not a recent institutional creation, but the product of a long historical process rooted in the Islamic legal practices of the archipelago (Syifa Lailia & Sri Hadiningrum, 2023). Since the era of Islamic kingdoms such as Demak, Aceh, and Banten, the settlement of disputes concerning marriage, inheritance, and family relations had been carried out through mechanisms based on Islamic teachings (Muhammad Fadhlán Is, 2025). These disputes were generally resolved by the *penghulu* or local religious leaders in communal settings, often in mosque verandas, through procedures that were relatively simple, accessible, and closely connected to the moral life of society. This historical pattern demonstrates that Islamic law operated in Indonesia not only as a normative doctrine, but as a practical legal system embedded in local social structures. In this respect, the Religious Courts did not emerge as an alien import from modern state-building; rather, they were institutionalized from a long-standing social demand for adjudication grounded in religious legitimacy and communal acceptance. This historical continuity is important because it explains why the Religious Courts retained social relevance even when formal state structures had not yet been fully developed (Ronaldi et al., 2025). In the early Islamic kingdoms, the roles of *penghulu*, *qadhi*, customary elders, and royal authorities were often intertwined. The lack of a firm separation between religious jurisdiction and political authority meant that legal decisions were shaped by a combination of Islamic norms, local custom, and royal intervention. Such a pattern should not be read as institutional weakness alone. Instead, it reflects a socio-legal configuration in which law functioned as an extension of social order, moral regulation, and religious authority (Fathurrahman et al., 2023). The Religious Courts, in their embryonic form, were therefore part of a broader governance structure that sought to maintain peace and legitimacy within Muslim communities. Their early existence confirms that Islamic adjudication in Indonesia developed organically from the needs of society rather than being imposed from above.

The trajectory changed significantly under Dutch colonial rule. The findings show that colonial authorities did not abolish Islamic adjudication outright, but restricted and reconfigured it through selective recognition (Sania et al., 2024). Through the principle of *receptie in complexu*, the Dutch acknowledged the validity of certain elements of Islamic law and customary law, but this acknowledgment was subordinated to colonial interests. The Religious Courts were permitted to operate in limited domains, especially family matters, while their jurisdiction over inheritance and property was gradually narrowed.

This produced a fragmented legal environment in which Islamic matters were divided between religious institutions and civil courts. The result was not legal neutrality, but a controlled legal pluralism designed to secure colonial administrative order. The colonial intervention also altered the institutional basis of the Religious Courts (Faisal, 2019). The influence of colonial thinkers and policies, including those associated with Snouck Hurgronje, contributed to the narrowing of their jurisdiction. The ordinances of the early twentieth century, especially the 1931 regulations and related Staatsblad provisions, further reduced the operational scope of the Religious Courts in regions such as Java and Madura. As a consequence, many inheritance and property disputes that had previously been handled through Islamic mechanisms were transferred to the civil courts. This created a structural disconnect between the legal expectations of Muslim society and the legal preferences of the colonial state. From the perspective of legal history, this moment marks an important transformation as the Religious Courts ceased to function as a socially authoritative institution and became a subordinate mechanism within a colonial legal hierarchy (Suradilaga, 2022).

The Japanese occupation reopened discussion about the status of the Religious Courts. The findings indicate that several Muslim leaders hoped to regain the authority that had been curtailed by the Dutch, but these hopes were limited by the political and administrative priorities of the occupation regime. In the Japanese administrative discourse, there were even suggestions that the Religious Courts should be abolished in the name of a modern state. Such proposals triggered strong resistance from Muslim leaders and nationalist figures who viewed the courts as essential to Muslim social life (Muhyidin, 2020). The arguments of figures such as Abikusno reflected a broader concern that Islamic adjudication should not be eliminated, but strengthened through professional staffing and state remuneration. This debate is significant because it shows that the status of the Religious Courts was already being contested within the ideological foundations of the emerging Indonesian state. The early years of independence were marked by cautious and pragmatic state responses. The findings show that rather than immediately enacting a comprehensive legal framework, the state issued temporary regulations, circulars, and ministerial decrees to manage the function of the Religious Courts. These measures were especially important in inheritance matters, where society required legal certainty while formal legislation remained incomplete. This transitional phase illustrates the adaptive character of the Religious Courts in the postcolonial state. They continued to operate as a practical legal forum even when the national regulatory framework was still under construction. In this period, the courts served as a bridge between social demand and state legality, reducing the gap between Islamic legal needs and the absence of a stable statutory system (Sukri, 2016).

The New Order period brought a more decisive institutional consolidation. The findings show that the Basic Law on Judicial Power, especially Law No. 14 of 1970, placed the Religious Courts within the national court system alongside the general courts, military courts, and administrative courts. This was not merely an administrative adjustment, but a constitutional recognition of the Religious Courts as part of the state judiciary (Faisal & Ananda Putri, 2024). The legal significance of this development is considerable because it marked the transition from a historically rooted but semi-formal institution into a fully recognized judicial organ. Subsequent legislation, especially the 1974 Marriage Law and its implementing regulations, expanded and clarified the authority of the Religious Courts in Islamic family law. This legislative consolidation transformed the courts from traditional community institutions into formal state institutions with defined jurisdiction, procedures, and legal status. However, the formalization of the Religious Courts also introduced new institutional demands. The findings indicate that legitimacy increased, but so did the expectations of professionalism, transparency, and procedural standardization. As judicial organs under the Supreme Court, the Religious Courts had to align traditional dispute settlement with modern judicial practice. This included the maintenance of case records, documented judgments, procedural discipline, and coordination with other judicial institutions. The transformation also required judges with stronger doctrinal competence and administrative skill. Thus, the modernization of the Religious Courts was not simply a matter of legal recognition, it was also a process of institutional adaptation to the expectations of the modern rule-of-law state (Jainuddin, 2021).

Another important finding concerns the uneven geographic development of the Religious Courts. In some regions, particularly Java, Madura, and parts of South Kalimantan, their early jurisdiction

remained limited mainly to marriage, divorce, and maintenance. In other areas, however, the scope expanded to include inheritance, waqf, baitul maal, and related matters. This unevenness reflects the layered influence of colonial policy, local tradition, and gradual national harmonization. It also reveals that the Religious Courts were not developed through a single uniform model, but through regionally differentiated legal trajectories (Dahwal & Arso, 2023). The implication is that the institutional identity of the Religious Courts in Indonesia has always been shaped by legal pluralism, not legal uniformity. This uneven legal history later made the compilation of Islamic law and the adoption of implementing regulations especially important. The findings suggest that such harmonization efforts were needed not only to standardize procedure, but also to strengthen legal certainty across regions. Without regulatory harmonization, jurisdictional disparities would continue to produce uncertainty and inequality in access to justice. The compilation of Islamic law therefore functioned as a national legal bridge that linked diverse local practices to a common judicial framework. In this sense, the historical evolution of the Religious Courts reveals a gradual movement from localized religious dispute settlement toward a more standardized national institution.

The historical findings also show that the Religious Courts have faced recurrent challenges related to their social legitimacy and institutional autonomy. Despite colonial restrictions, political contestation, and administrative restructuring, the courts continued to reappear because they satisfied a persistent social need among Muslim communities. Their resilience lies in the fact that they provided adjudication that was not only legally functional but also religiously meaningful. This dual legitimacy, social and normative, has been one of the main reasons for their endurance. At the same time, the study indicates that historical continuity alone is insufficient to ensure relevance. The Religious Courts must continue to evolve institutionally in response to modern conditions without abandoning their foundational Islamic values. Their historical trajectory therefore provides not a static narrative, but a dynamic reference point for contemporary reform. From a broader analytical perspective, the history of the Religious Courts demonstrates the interaction between legal tradition, political authority, and state formation. The institution survived because it was repeatedly reinterpreted and re-legitimized across different political regimes. The findings show that the Religious Courts were first embedded in communal and royal life, then restricted under colonialism, then reasserted in the postcolonial state, and finally formalized within the national judiciary. This long trajectory supports the view that Islamic law in Indonesia has never existed outside politics, but has always been negotiated through political structures. Understanding this history is therefore essential for evaluating current debates on the role of the Religious Courts in the legal system (Karin Yuhsan & Dedi Ratno, 2025).

### **Contemporary Challenges and Institutional Development in the National Legal System**

The Religious Courts occupy a distinct and constitutionally significant position within the legal system of the Republic of Indonesia. They are not secondary religious bodies operating on the margins of the state, but formal judicial organs recognized alongside the General Courts, Administrative Courts, and Military Courts. Their existence under the authority of the Supreme Court confirms that the Religious Courts are integrated into the national judiciary rather than existing outside it. This is a crucial conceptual point because it shows that the Indonesian state has chosen not to secularize legal authority entirely, but to accommodate Islamic adjudication within the architecture of constitutional law. The conceptual basis of this institutional position lies in the principle of Islamic personality. The findings show that the jurisdiction of the Religious Courts applies specifically to Muslim citizens, especially in matters of family law and Islamic civil matters (Poleshko, 2024). This principle is important because it allows the state to recognize religious identity as a legitimate legal category without fragmenting the national legal order. It also provides a clear basis for jurisdictional allocation. However, the application of this principle requires administrative precision. Cases involving interfaith marriage, inheritance disputes, or overlapping family claims often expose the complexity of applying personal jurisdiction in a plural society. Thus, the principle

of Islamic personality is both a doctrinal foundation and an administrative challenge (Johanes Warbung et al., 2025).

From a juridical perspective, the Religious Courts derive their authority from a series of laws and regulations that define their structure, competence, and procedural framework. The findings show that legal recognition is not symbolic only; it is operationalized through statutes that assign specific judicial functions to the Religious Courts. This positive legal basis strengthens their legitimacy and places them within the principle of legality that underpins the rule-of-law state. The significance of this arrangement is that Islamic law is not applied informally or arbitrarily, but through formal state institutions governed by procedural norms. In this way, the Religious Courts become a mechanism for translating religious values into public law (Widodo, 2022). The study further shows that the concept of the Religious Courts reflects a synthesis between Islamic tradition and the modern state system. Historically, Islamic legal institutions in the archipelago functioned through the authority of *penghulu* and *qadhi*, with a strong moral and communal character. In the modern period, however, these functions have been restructured through statutory law and bureaucratic administration. This does not mean that the religious essence of the institution has disappeared. Rather, it means that the institution has been reconfigured to fit the demands of a modern legal state. The Religious Courts thus represent an institutional compromise as they preserve Islamic legal substance while operating within a national procedural framework (Mujib et al., 2024).

The expansion of the Religious Courts' jurisdiction reflects changing social realities. Their competence is no longer limited to marriage, divorce, reconciliation, maintenance, and child custody. It now extends to inheritance, *waqf*, *zakat*, *infak*, *sedekah*, and Islamic economic disputes. This development is important because it demonstrates that the Religious Courts are not static institutions but dynamic organs of legal adaptation. As Muslim society becomes more legally complex, the courts are required to address a broader range of issues that are still grounded in *sharia* principles. The expansion of jurisdiction therefore signifies institutional maturity, but also creates a higher burden of competence and coordination. The strategic function of the Religious Courts in the national legal system lies in their ability to provide justice that is both religiously legitimate and socially accepted. The findings suggest that many Muslim citizens seek the Religious Courts because they view them as the most appropriate forum for resolving family and religious civil disputes. This preference is not only theological, but also practical. The courts are expected to deliver judgments that are sensitive to communal values and family relationships. Their role therefore extends beyond formal adjudication. They help maintain social harmony, prevent conflict escalation, and preserve moral order within families and communities (Fuadi et al., 2023).

The Religious Courts also contribute to the realization of Pancasila-based legal values. The principle of belief in the Almighty God is reflected in the state's recognition of religious law, while the principles of social justice and humanity are embodied in the protection of litigants' rights, especially those of women and children. The findings show that the Religious Courts are not in conflict with the national ideology; instead, they enrich it by providing a concrete institutional means for respecting religious diversity within a unified legal system. This is a significant point because it challenges any simplistic assumption that religious adjudication is incompatible with modern statehood. In the Indonesian context, the Religious Courts illustrate how pluralism can be integrated into state law without sacrificing coherence (Bimasakti, 2025). At the same time, the findings reveal that the conceptual strength of the Religious Courts is accompanied by persistent challenges. Public perception often places them below the General Courts in terms of status or prestige. This perception is problematic because it may reduce public confidence in their authority. The study also shows that limited facilities, uneven infrastructure, and shortages of skilled personnel continue to affect institutional performance. Moreover, the increasing complexity of Islamic economic disputes requires specialized judicial competence that is not yet evenly distributed. These issues indicate that conceptual recognition alone does not guarantee effective implementation. Institutional capacity remains a decisive factor.

Then, legal and political dynamics influence the development of the Religious Courts. Their position has often depended on broader state priorities and legislative agendas. In some situations, political interests have slowed reform or delayed the harmonization of regulations. This suggests that the Religious

Courts are not immune to the dynamics of power. Their institutional strength depends not only on legal doctrine, but also on political commitment. Therefore, sustained support from policymakers is necessary to preserve the independence, quality, and relevance of the Religious Courts within the national system (Eryandi Ray et al., 2025).

Further, the modern administrative transformation of the Religious Courts. The adoption of electronic systems, digital case management, and public service reforms demonstrates that the institution is adapting to contemporary standards of efficiency and transparency. This modernization is important because it aligns the Religious Courts with broader judicial reform efforts in Indonesia. It also shows that the institution is not trapped in tradition, but capable of innovation. However, modernization must be balanced with doctrinal coherence and human sensitivity (Gronic, 2022). The Religious Courts cannot simply imitate administrative efficiency; they must retain their identity as institutions rooted in Islamic legal ethics. The expansion of jurisdiction into the Islamic economic sector also has important conceptual implications. As Islamic finance continues to grow in Indonesia, the Religious Courts are increasingly becoming the forum for resolving sharia-based commercial disputes. This development strengthens their role in the national legal economy and broadens their societal relevance. Yet it also demands judges who are competent not only in classical fiqh, but also in contemporary financial transactions, contract analysis, and regulatory interpretation (Nabilah et al., 2024). Thus, the conceptual expansion of the Religious Courts must be accompanied by curricular, institutional, and professional reform.

Overall, the Religious Courts in Indonesia are best understood as a constitutionally integrated, religiously grounded, and socially responsive judicial institution. Their conceptual position is not marginal but central within the framework of legal pluralism managed by the state. They demonstrate that Islamic law can be institutionalized without losing its normative character, while still conforming to state legal procedures. This synthesis is one of the key features of the Indonesian legal system. It also explains why the Religious Courts remain relevant despite historical challenges and structural limitations.

## Conclusion

This study shows that the Religious Courts in Indonesia have developed as a resilient institution shaped by Islamic legal tradition, colonial restriction, and post-independence state formation. Their continued existence reflects not only juridical recognition, but also strong social legitimacy among Muslim communities. The study also indicates that their current relevance depends on more than historical continuity. Challenges such as overlapping jurisdiction, uneven judicial capacity, and the need for technological and procedural modernization require sustained reform. Without such adjustment, the institution risks losing effectiveness in responding to contemporary legal needs. At the same time, the Religious Courts remain strategically important because they connect Islamic values with the national legal system. Their future strength lies in maintaining this balance through clearer regulation, stronger professionalism, and more responsive public service.

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## Conflict of Interest

This article has no conflicts of interest.

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