

Original Article

Islamic Role of Bystander in Domestic Violence Prevention

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Abstract

Domestic violence is a pervasive global issue cutting across ethnic, social and religious background, leaving behind serious social, psychological, and economic trauma in its victims, combating domestic violence (DV) is therefore, very crucial to human and societal development. This article aims to examine fighting domestic violence within the context of Islamic teachings, focusing on the religious, moral and legal obligations of bystanders. Using a qualitative approach, the study explores the fundamental sources of Islamic law; Quran, Prophetic traditions, and Islamic jurisprudential principles. The study examines the Islamic principle of Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahi anil Munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil) as one of the fundamental principles of Islam which places both moral and religious obligation on bystander to intervene and protect the vulnerable in the face of aggression, hence, serves as contribution to the global fight against domestic violence particularly relevant for policymakers, scholars, and religious leaders.

Keywords: Bystander; Domestic violence; Islamic role; Prevention.

Introduction

Domestic violence is one of the unspoken heinous crimes occurring nearly behind the closed doors of many homes, it transcends geographical, cultural, religious and socio-economic boundaries, posing significant threats and damage to individuals, families, and societies in general. Defined as any pattern of abusive behavior within intimate relationships that seeks to gain power or control over another person, domestic violence (DV) could be in form of infliction of physical, psychological, sexual, or financial harm on victims by the perpetrators. The World Health Organization report in 2021¹, indicates that nearly one in three women worldwide (approximately 30%) have at a point in their lives witnessed a form of physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner. The impacts of DV extend far beyond the victims themselves, children, families, and communities also share from the negative impact of domestic violence. Its consequences, includes physical injuries, psychological trauma, economic instability, and the perpetuation of cycles of abuse ².

Efforts in combatting DV in the past decades were based on secular legal systems and frameworks, subsequently, the desired to integrate cultural and religious based approaches became a necessity due to the obvious reason that faith and culture play a crucial role in shaping individual and community behavior as a source of support, restrain or sometimes a justification for some questionable behaviors. The misinterpretations of Islamic texts, especially Quran 4:34 have been used as justification for abusive behavior by some Muslims ³. This misconception creates a strong barrier

¹ Sarah J. White and others, 'Global Prevalence and Mental Health Outcomes of Intimate Partner Violence Among Women: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis', *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 25.1 (2024), 494–511 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380231155529>>.

² Claudia García-Moreno and others, 'The Health-Systems Response to Violence against Women', *The Lancet*, 385.9977 (2015), 1567–79 <[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(14\)61837-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(14)61837-7)>.

³ Nada Ibrahim and Mohamad Abdalla, "A Critical Examination of Qur'an 4:34 and Its Relevance to Intimate Partner Violence in Muslim Families," *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 5, no. 3 (December 30, 2010): 327–49,



to bystander intervention in many Muslim communities. It is therefore, necessary to critically examine the teachings of Islam in relation to abusive behavior within family circle. By doing these insights would be provided on how Islam unequivocally condemns harmful behavior towards others and advocates for justice, compassion, and mutual respect in society.

Two questions are therefore, central to this research work (1) How does Islam view domestic violence? and (2) What are the Islamic obligation of a bystander in an event of domestic violence? To address these questions, a critical study of Quranic principles, Prophetic traditions (*Sunnah*), and Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) is required.

The scope of this article therefore, includes detailed exploration of relevant Quranic verses and *Hadiths* that emphasize the sanctity of human life, love and compassion within the family as well as the protection of the oppressed people. The article also seeks to explore the impeding challenges to intervention, such as cultural stigmas, systemic barriers, and the need to have a comprehensive framework that combine Islamic principles with modern strategies for combating DV especially in Muslim dominated societies⁴. The strikes a balance between faith-based perspectives with global efforts to combat DV which are usually secularly oriented, offering solutions that resonate with Muslim communities and uphold the universal principles of justice and human dignity.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach grounded in doctrinal and textual analysis of primary Islamic sources. The research examines relevant Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions (*Hadith*), and established principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) to explore the Islamic perspective on domestic violence and the religious obligation of bystander intervention. In addition, selected contemporary scholarly works on domestic violence and Islamic ethics are reviewed to contextualize the discussion within current academic discourse. Through this analytical framework, the study constructs a normative model outlining the moral and collective responsibilities of individuals and institutions in preventing domestic violence.

Results and Discussions

Theoretical Framework of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is one of the issues of great concern to public health and human rights violations of today. Numerous researches have shown the trend and prevalence nature of the crime, its root causes, and consequences across different cultural and socio-economic groups. According to the World Health Organization report nearly 30% of women population globally have witness one or two forms of DV in their life time⁵. Though, several scholars classified DV as gender-based violence affecting mostly the women folks of the societies, it has also been proven to have a significant damaging effect on men, children, families, and the broader societal structures⁶.

The root causes of DV are linked to several factors ranging from; individual perception/rational, community, and societal factors. Studies unveil that elements such as patriarchal norms, economic stress, substance abuse, and inadequate legal protections of victims among others are the key factors responsible for DV in several communities⁷. However, it is not a myth to say that cultural indulgence

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15564908.2010.551278>.

⁴ Amir Masoud Sharifnia and others, 'Muslim Women's Experiences of Domestic Violence and Abuse: A Meta-Ethnography of Global Evidence', *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 26.4 (2025), 694–711 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380241286836>>.

⁵ World Health Organization, *Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2023: Global, Regional and National Prevalence Estimates for Intimate Partner Violence against Women and Non-Partner Sexual Violence against Women* (Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, 2025); K. M. Devries and others, 'The Global Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women', *Science*, 340.6140 (2013), 1527–28 <<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1240937>>.

⁶ Y Al-Qaradawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam* (Islamic Book Trust, 1995); Matthias Brockstedt, Serpil Uğur Baysal and Kadir Daştan, 'The Impact of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault on Family Dynamics and Child Development: A Comprehensive Review', *Turkish Archives of Pediatrics*, 60.1 (2025), 5–12 <<https://doi.org/10.5152/TurkArchPediatr.2025.24169>>.

⁷ M I Al-Tirmidhi and Abu Khaliyl, *Jami' Al-Tirmidhi, Translated by Abu Khaliyl* (Darussalam Publishers, 2007); Robyn Joy Brunton and Rachel Dryer, 'Intimate Partner Violence Risk Factors: A Vulnerability-Adaptation



of DV makes its profound and impossible for bystander to penetrate, these beliefs help the spread of the menace by creating environments where victims themselves justify the actions of their abusers, thus, shielding interventions and responsibilities.

Discussions on domestic violence within the context of Islamic teachings had generated a lot of controversies and debates among scholars over the years, most scholars seek to explore Islamic principles by making submissions balancing Islamic teachings, family relationships, justice, and harm prevention on one hand and the need for the maintenance of the doctrine of *Male* superiority especially in the family relationship on the other.

The Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) in a number of traditions (*Hadith*) is reported to have shown strong disapproval of violence against women. In a well-known narration he (PBUH) states, "The best of you are the best to their family, and I am the best of you to my family"⁸. This tradition clearly demonstrates the importance of being compassionate towards family. Additionally, the Prophet's life demonstrates kindness, love, empathy and respect within familial relationships, serving as a true model for Islamic moral conduct⁹. There is no doubt that DV contradicts all the major principles and teachings of Islamic religion, this is because Islam emphasizes sanctity of family life, mutual respect, and compassion between spouses, by providing clear guidance in its primary sources to establish harmony through non-violent conflict resolution.

Theoretically, the framework for understanding the position of Islam on DV could be constructed on some of the key Islamic principles. These principles provide a holistic approach to addressing any Islamic issues, emphasizing justice, compassion, and collective responsibility.

Tawhid (Oneness of God

Islamic beliefs and practices are based on the concept of absolute oneness of Allah; which is known as *Tawhid* in Islam. *Tawhid* is the cornerstone of Islamic beliefs and practice. It demarcates Islam from other religions and beliefs, it connects man, his actions, existence and purpose of creation to the sole aim of worshiping Allah (SWT) upon whom he is accountable¹⁰. Important to *Tawhid* is the idea of justice (*Adl*) and compassion (*Rahmah*), which are essential attributes of Allah and must be reflected in human behavior. The Qur'an emphasizes these values, stating:

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice"¹¹.

Tawhid necessitates justice and fairness within relationships, ensuring the protection of members from harm as relationships are 'trusts' from Allah (SWT). It also underscores the importance of compassion, as reflected in the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) teachings:

"The believers, in their mutual kindness, compassion, and sympathy, are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever"¹²

Stress Model Approach', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 39.15–16 (2024), 3738–63 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605241234352>>.

⁸ Fitria Miftakhul Husna, Mohammad Ikhwanuddin and Gandhung Fajar Panjalu, 'Non-Violence Family Education; Takhrīj Hadith About the Prophet Not Hitting His Wife in Musnad Ahmad Bin Hanbal', *Al-Thariqah Journal of Islamic Religious Education*, 9.2 (2025), 323–36 <[https://doi.org/10.25299/althariqah.2024.vol9\(2\).13617](https://doi.org/10.25299/althariqah.2024.vol9(2).13617)>; M Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an* (Gibraltar: Dar Al-Andalus, 1980).

⁹ Heni Halimatussyadiah and others, 'Family Harmony: Integration of Love, Effective Communication, and Life Balance from an Islamic and Family Psychology Perspective', *Familia: Journal of Family Law*, 5.1 (2024), 37–53 <<https://doi.org/10.24239/familia.v5i1.213>>.

¹⁰ V L Banyard, M M Moynihan and E G Plante, 'Sexual Violence Prevention through Bystander Education: An Experimental Evaluation', *Journal of Community Psychology*, 45.1 (2017), 22–28 <<https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.21822>>.

¹¹ Peter A. Schad, Lee Rivers Mobley and Carol M. Hamilton, 'Building a Biomedical Cyberinfrastructure for Collaborative Research', *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 40.5 (2011), S144–50 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2011.01.018>>.

¹² Avanda Chintya Cahyaning Putri Putri and Jubaedi, 'Social Solidarity Within the Framework of Faith: Interpretation of the Hadith from the Perspective of Robert Putnam's Theory', *Canonica Religia*, 3.1 (2025), 63–74 <<https://doi.org/10.30762/cr.v3i1.3109>>.



This principle establishes that DV violates the divine mandate for justice and mercy, making it an act not consistent with *Tawhid* and therefore, a breach of trust and consequently a form of disobedience towards God.

Maqasid al-Sharia (Objectives of Islamic Law)

Domestic violence goes contrary to the main objectives of Islamic law: the objectives are entrenched in Islamic moral and legal framework to ensure human well-being on earth through the protection of the essential values of man such as; life (*Nafs*), dignity (*Karama*), family (*Nasl*), intellect (*Aql*), and property (*Mal*). It is no doubt that victims who are faced with constant physical and emotional abuse and can die from such abuses thus, making DV a serious threat to life and a violation of human dignity (*Karama*) through it degrading and abusive treatment of the victim. Victims of DV are psychologically demoralized in such a way that they feel unworthy.

In addition, DV causes disruption and destabilizing the family unit, which is the cornerstone of Islamic society. Ibn Ashur elaborates that the primary purpose of Sharia is to establish justice and eliminate harm (*Darar*), stating, “Harm should be removed” (*La Darar wa La Dirar* meaning; No harm and reciprocation of harm)¹³. DV, as a form of harm, is antithetical to the goals of Sharia. The Qur'an further reinforces this principle: “And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful”¹⁴. This directive prohibits physical, emotional and psychological harm, and emphasizes the need for protection and care within families.

Framework for Bystanders Intervention in Islam

The Islamic stands on intervention of bystander in preventing and de-escalating harm including domestic abuse is grounded in the principle of *Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahi anil Munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil). This principle obligates Muslims to prevent harm and support the oppressed, including victims of DV.

Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahi anil Munkar (Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil)

The principle of *Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahi anil Munkar* underscores the very importance of collective responsibility of individuals and communities to prevent harm and promote good in society. The Allah (SWT) commands: “Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong”¹⁵. This principle requires bystanders to intervene when witnessing acts of injustice or oppression, including DV by taking a proactive measure to prevent harm through measures like creating awareness aimed at preventing the occurrence of harm, direct intervention during the occurrence of harm and offering support to victims. However, reporting abuse to authorities is regarded as the most effective indirect intervention in DV. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized this responsibility thus: “Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; if he is unable, then with his tongue; and if he is unable, then with his heart-that is the weakest of faith”¹⁶. Bystander intervention thus, is rooted in this principle, which plays a critical role in disrupting cycles of abuse and ensuring accountability. However, practical challenges such as cultural stigmas and fear of reprisal among others often hinder this obligation, thus the need for educational and institutional

¹³ Ziadul Ulum Wahid, Handoko Budi Prasetyo and Tutik Hamidah, ‘Ibn Asyur’s Concept of Maqashid Al-Shariah and Its Urgency as a Basis for Contemporary Ijtihad’, *Phonology: Journal of English Language and Literature Scientists*, 3.2 (2025), 14–26 <<https://doi.org/10.61132/fonologi.v3i2.1674>>; Achmad Zubairin, Abd. Muid N and Kamal Fiqry Musa, ‘The Maqasidi Approach In Islamic Legislation According To Ibn ‘Ashur In Al-Tahrir Wa Al-Tanwir’, *Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 11.1 (2024), 25–46 <<https://doi.org/10.15408/iu.v11i1.41648>>.

¹⁴ Mohammad Mustaqim Malek and others, ‘Honouring Wishes of Patients: An Islamic View on the Implementation of the Advance Medical Directive in Malaysia’, *Malaysian Journal of Medical Sciences*, 28.2 (2021), 28–38 <<https://doi.org/10.21315/mjms2021.28.2.3>>.

¹⁵ Husnun Nurhana and Ikin Asikin, ‘The Value of Education in Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar in QS Ali Imran 104 and 110’, *Journal of Islamic Religious Education Research*, 2024, 37–42 <<https://doi.org/10.29313/jrpai.v4i1.3870>>.

¹⁶ Siti Zubaidah Ismail, ‘Policing, Hisbah & the Present Challenges of Religious Law Enforcement in Malaysia’, *AHKAM: Journal of Sharia Science*, 25.2 (2025), 231–48 <<https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v25i2.42441>>.



support to empower bystander and communities in fighting DV is very crucial. Similarly, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet also emphasize and provides guidance on the role of bystanders in preventing and addressing DV.

Islam places a collective responsibility on the community to uphold justice and intervene when harm occurs. The Prophet said: "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is oppressed." When asked how to help an oppressor, he replied: "By preventing him from oppressing others"¹⁷. This *Hadith* categorically underscore the importance of proactive intervention by bystanders to prevent harm. It shows that silence in the face of injustice, such as DV, is inconsistent with Islamic teachings and values, therefore, positioning bystanders as critical agents in eradicating DV. Interestingly, collective responsibility is one of the merits of Islamic religious teachings, people are regarded as one family and community¹⁸. In this context therefore, the principle of *Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahi anil Munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil) becomes a powerful moral and religious basis for bystander intervention¹⁹. Thus, bystander intervention in Islam is both a collective and individual responsibility. The principle emphasizes the duty of individuals toward one another in opposing injustice and oppression at one hand, and the protection of the vulnerable on the other. The present research believes in aligning this Islamic tenet with contemporary strategies for bystander intervention, as an essential key for community cultural sensitivity approach towards preventing and addressing DV.

Modes of Bystanders' Intervention in Islam

To prevent harm and promote good in society, the duty of bystander to intervene and prevent harm from escalating extends to individual, institutions and the general community who witness any forms of harm, positioning them as key actors in addressing and mitigating such harm. Islamic duty to take proactive steps in mitigating harms is both moral and legal, based on the provisions of Quran and Prophetic traditions as earlier discussed. In other to effectively carry out this duty, the following measures are considered;

Reporting Abuses: Individual and Communal Intervention

Protection of human dignity and sanctity of life is one of the objectives (*Maqasid al-Sharia*) of Islamic law. Reporting DV therefore, is a moral and religious duty of every individual Muslims and the community. Early detection and reporting of DV is very crucial and helpful in ensuring safety and well-being of victims. In this regard, history has it that testimonies and reports from bystanders were relied on by Islamic courts to address grievances and administer justice in communities²⁰. One notable instance of such historical account involves the Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab, who is reported to have personally investigated complaints of domestic abuse and intervened to protect victims²¹. Such examples underscore the Islamic precedent for active bystander involvement in upholding justice and preventing violence. Similarly, communal responsibility of preventing harm and

¹⁷ Mezhar Hussain and Attia Amanullah, 'Examining the Link between Employer Branding Practices and Employee Retention in Healthcare Sector: Role of Person-Organization Fit as a Mediator', *Journal of Religious and Social Studies*, 4.1 Jan-Jun (2024), 39–60 <<https://doi.org/10.53583/jrss07.04.2024>>.

¹⁸ M Y Ibn Majah and Nasiruddin al-Khattab, *Sunan Ibn Majah, Translated by Nasiruddin Al-Khattab* (Darussalam Publishers, 2007); Lutfi Hilman and Ummi Kultsum, 'Collective Islamic Practices And National Solidarity: Recontextualizing Kh Ahmad Sanusi's Exegesis In Contemporary Indonesia', *Penamas*, 38.1 (2025), 350–64 <<https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v38i1.882>>.

¹⁹ Rachel Jewkes, Michael Flood and James Lang, 'From Work with Men and Boys to Changes of Social Norms and Reduction of Inequities in Gender Relations: A Conceptual Shift in Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls', *The Lancet*, 385.9977 (2015), 1580–89 <[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(14\)61683-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(14)61683-4)>.

²⁰ Nofardi Nofardi, 'Testimonium de Auditu Witness: Comparison of Maṣlāḥah in the Settlement of Syiqāq in the Religious Court of the Border Regions', *Samarah: Journal of Family Law and Islamic Law*, 7.2 (2023), 1016 <<https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v7i2.11493>>.

²¹ Suhartati and others, 'Umar Bin Khattab's Philosophical Ijtihad Thinking On The Restorative Justice Approach In Islamic Criminal Law', *Al-Risalah Journal of Sharia and Legal Sciences*, 2024, 224–44 <<https://doi.org/10.24252/al-risalah.vi.52557>>; H R Kusha, 'Family Law and Domestic Violence in Muslim Societies: A Study in Islamic Jurisprudence', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 56.2 (2020), 265–81 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2019.1635221>>.



supporting victims of aggression is buttressed in the following Quranic injunction; “And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression”²².

The Quran emphasized the importance of collective responsibility of promoting good and preventing harm. Bystanders’ duty therefore, is not restricted to the victim alone but also to the integrity of the community where such aggression is committed. As a member of a larger social fabric, the bystander is encouraged to intervene, report, or seek help on behalf of the victim, moreover, his failure to act results in the worsening of the situation and the continuation of such harmful behavior in the community. Therefore, community members must not remain passive bystanders but should engage in efforts to protect the victim and hold the perpetrator accountable.

Role of Mosques, Imams, and Islamic Institutions as Bystander

The mosque, as the center of Islamic communal life, plays a fundamental role in addressing and preventing DV if utilize effectively as venues for social support, education, and counseling²³. Imams, as religious leaders have the potential of influencing the attitudes and behaviors of their congregations, this put them in better positions to respond to domestic violence. Imams can use the platform of Friday sermons (*Khutbah*) or during special community events such as; marriages and child naming ceremony to create awareness and educate their followers on the harmful effect of DV, the Islamic teachings related to respect, justice, and the protection of family members from harm could be areas of focuses in such sermons²⁴. Similarly, the Imams could use the same platform to address issues of misconceptions about certain Quranic verses and *Hadiths* that have often been misused to justify violence. For instance, the controversial interpretation of Quran 4:34 can be clarified by Imams, emphasizing the importance of reconciliation, dialogue, and non-violence means of dispute resolution²⁵.

Judicial Intervention

Actions which are harmful such as domestic violence should be criminalized. Islamic law clearly condemned and categorizes punishments for harmful actions into; *Hudud* (fixed punishments), *Qisas* (retaliatory justice), and *Ta’zir* (discretionary punishments). Domestic violence by its nature falls under Islamic law of *Ta’zir* which allows for judicial discretion to penalize the perpetrator based on the severity of the harm caused.

In most Muslim-majority countries where Islamic personal law is in operational, *Fiqh*-based laws are integrated into civil legislation to criminalize domestic violence and provide support services for victims. In addition, Islam gives permission to woman enduring harm in her marriage to petition for a judicial separation (*Khul’* or *Faskh*), supported by the Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) rulings in cases of domestic discord. Similarly, if a woman is faced with domestic violence, she can appeal to an Islamic court for justice. In a well-documented case of domestic violence, a woman named Jamila, sought divorce from her husband due to irreconcilable differences and her dissatisfaction with his behavior. The Prophet permitted her to dissolve the marriage, thus, emphasizing the importance of mutual consent and well-being in marital relationships²⁶.

Some Practical Guidelines for Bystanders

To fulfill the moral and religious obligation of intervention, bystanders can take the following actions in accordance with Islamic principles:

²² Wahyu Fahrul Rizki, ‘Qirâ’ah Mubâdalah Approach To The Qur’an: The Interpretation Of Q.S. Al-Nisâ’ [4]: 34’, *ULUL ALBAB Journal of Islamic Studies*, 21.2 (2020), 269–88 <<https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v21i2.10218>>.

²³ Norazla Abdul Wahab and Fatin Nur Majdina Nordin, ‘Mosques as Transit Centers for Protection and Complaints of Domestic Violence Cases: Preliminary Review’, *International Journal of Mosque, Zakat And Waqaf Management (Al-Mimbar)*, 2021, 96–111 <<https://doi.org/10.53840/almimbar.v1i2.29>>.

²⁴ Sayed Abubaker Hashimi, ‘The Role of the Friday Khutbah in the Moral and Ethical Upbringing of Society’s Individuals’, *Journal of Social Sciences - Kabul University*, 7.3 (2024), 87–102 <<https://doi.org/10.62810/jss.v7i3.70>>.

²⁵ Dewi Putri and others, ‘Reinterpretation of Husband and Wife Relations in Building Household Harmony (A Contextual Approach to QS. an-Nisaa’ (4): 34)’, *Islamika: Journal of Islamic Sciences*, 24.2 (2024), 164.

²⁶ Muhammad Arif and Widya Sari, ‘Deconstruction of The Agreement in Islamic Marriage Law’, *Al Ahkam*, 19.1 (2023), 8–20 <<https://doi.org/10.37035/ajh.v19i1.7960>>.



1. **Direct Intervention:** direct intervention should be used cautiously and preferably by authorities and those who are well trained and equipped, this is because despite been very effective where there is fear of potential harm on the victim, it could as well be very dangerous, especially where the bystander lacks the necessary skills or strength to intervene. Directive intervention should only be used if it is safe to do so, bystanders could stop the violence, either by addressing the perpetrator or physically incapacitating the aggressor from committing further harm.
2. **Support for Victims:** Victims could be supported practically and emotionally. Emotional and practical support to victims may be by helping them access resources or seeking legal assistance and sometimes it may include financial assistance. It is important to let victims know they are not alone, they have the general support of Islamic *Ummah* to ensue justice is done to them²⁷.
3. **Reporting Abuse:** Bystander should be able to analyses situation to take appropriate steps to de-escalate it. When direct intervention is not possible, bystanders must report the abuse to relevant authorities, including family members, community leaders, or law enforcement²⁸. This is the least action a bystander could take in preventing DV.

Barriers to intervention

It is saddened to know that despite the clear Islamic teachings and directives on the need to intervene and prevent harm from taking place, there still exist some beliefs that hinder intervention in domestic violence. Some of these beliefs include;

Family Privacy and culture

There is a strong cultural protection for family privacy in most Muslim and non-Muslim majority communities. The strong need to protect family honor and dignity had sometimes out weight the need for security and individual safety, this has led to a strong culture of silence in most communities to the extent that victims do not speak out and bystander do not intervene, hence, those facing DV kept mute till they finally succumb to the abuse. Misconceptions such as these provide barriers to addressing the issue effectively. However, Islamic teachings provide a strong challenge to these cultural barriers by making non- intervention in face of DV not just a personal failure of individual bystander but a violation of communal responsibility. Therefore, reshaping cultural norms that condone or ignore violence is religious and moral responsibility of individual Muslims, Imam and Institutions.

Bystander in addition should be trained in addition to respecting family boundary, the early detection and warning signs of abusive relationship to enable them responses timely and appropriately, either by offering direct support or referring victims to professional services.

General programs on spreading awareness, educating the community about Islamic teachings on the protection of family and intervening in cases of domestic violence should one of the basic duties of the Mosque and the Imams²⁹.

Through collective efforts and support the Muslim community can effectively combat domestic violence and protect the dignity and well-being of its members. The *Hadith* "The believers are like one body" serves as a reminder that harm to one member of the community is a harm on the whole community as well. While cultural norms might try to prevent intervention, Islamic principles call for the preservation of human dignity and the prohibition of harm, which should compel bystanders to act even in the face of such cultural barriers.

Fear of Retaliation

The fear of retaliation from the abuser is another major challenge to bystander intervention in DV. If the bystander and the abuser reside in the same community or social network, there may be

²⁷ Elfa Murdiana and others, 'The Victim's Best Interest Principle in Islamic Law: An Examination of the Substance of Sexual Violence in Muslim Majority Countries in the Contemporary Era', *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review*, 5.1 (2026), 33–60 <<https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v5i1.10654>>.

²⁸ Ella Kuskoff and Cameron Parsell, 'Bystander Intervention in Intimate Partner Violence: A Scoping Review of Experiences and Outcomes', *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 25.3 (2024), 1799–1813 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380231195886>>.

²⁹ Aprilita Hajar, 'The Role of Islamic Da'wah in Preventing Violence and Building Harmonious Families', *Ath-Thariq: Journal of Da'wah and Communication*, 9.1 (2025), 43–55 <<https://doi.org/10.32332/ath-thariq.v9i1/tnacsw62>>.



fear that their involvement will lead to negative consequences upon themselves or their loved ones, especially if the abuser holds power within the family or community structure 33. Bystander may also be silence by the abuser who may use threats or intimidation to ensure that their behavior remains unchallenged, the situation is more complicated if the abuser holds vital or prestigious position in the community, exposing such persons is a very difficult task for any bystanders who may feel powerless to intervene or speak out without facing severe consequences.

Islamic teachings, however, stress the importance of standing for justice, even in the face of fear or retaliation. The Quran encourages believers to "speak the truth, even if it be against yourselves" 34 and to support the oppressed, regardless of the challenges involved. The *Hadith*, "Whosoever among you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is unable to do so, then with his heart and that is the weakest of faith" is particularly relevant in this regard, it reinforces the notion that standing against wrongdoing, even in the face of personal risk, is a fundamental duty for Muslims, it also determines the various dimensions for bystanders intervention and I believe the least dimension to intervene when witnessing DV is not silence as appeared in the *Hadith* but reporting abuses to the rightful authorities as this is more align to the general objectives of sharia.

Lack of Knowledge or Resources

lack of awareness or resources is another obstacle to bystanders. There is need to sensitize community members on DV, its signs, or the proper course of action to take within the available societal measures as to when witnessing domestic violence. Without knowledge of available resources such as legal aid, shelters, or counseling services bystanders may feel helpless and unsure of how to intervene effectively. In addition, inadvertently escalating the violence or misunderstanding the situation, can paralyze potential bystanders. Thus, there is a need for greater education and resources to empower bystanders to take appropriate action in cases of DV.

Conclusion

The Islamic perspective on DV and the role of bystander offers valuable insights into the basic teachings of Islam in domestic relation which symbolizes justice, compassion, and mercy among couples as oppose the wrong notion that Islam accommodate and encourages violence against women through its teachings. Though, this discussion on domestic violence is gender centered, it does not rule out the fact that men were also sometime victims of DV. It is important to note that Islam does not condone violence, being it against *Male* or *feMale*. The responsibility to prevent harm is not limited to the victim but extends to the wider community. Bystanders, religious leaders, and families all play integral roles in combating DV, these collective efforts can significantly reduce the incidence of abuse. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of preventing harm and promoting reconciliation. However, in cases of abuse, bystanders should understand that reconciliation should not come at the cost of the victim's safety. There should be no hesitation in applying other measures to ensure safety of the victim where such outweighs the importance of preserving the marriage. By applying Islamic principles of justice, kindness, and mutual support, Muslims can create a society where DV is no longer tolerated, and where victims are supported and empowered to seek justice. The commitment to upholding the dignity of every individual, as taught in Islam, provides a strong foundation for eradicating DV and ensuring that all members of the community live in safety and peace.

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