

## **The Relationship between the Cybercrime Law of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2007 and Islamic Law**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study aimed to examine the relationship between the Saudi Anti-Cybercrime Law of 2007 and Islamic law in light of the increasing prevalence of cybercrimes and the legal, security, and ethical challenges they pose. The research problem focused on the extent to which the provisions and objectives of the law are consistent with the principles and objectives of Islamic law in addressing emerging cybercrimes. The research adopts the descriptive-comparative approach by analyzing the objectives and provisions of the law and comparing them with relevant Islamic legal texts and jurisprudential principles. The findings revealed a clear compatibility between the Anti-Cybercrime Law and the objectives of Islamic law in preserving religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. The study also showed that the law's objectives related to information security, digital rights protection, public interest, and the national economy are consistent with Islamic principles. Furthermore, the study confirmed that the criminalization of eavesdropping, blackmail, threats, electronic forgery and destruction, privacy violations, defamation, cyber fraud, identity theft, unauthorized access hacking, and network disruption is in line with the provisions of Islamic Sharia aimed at protecting rights, preventing harm, and promoting security and stability within society. The study recommends strengthening public awareness programs on cybersecurity and the ethical use of technology, continuing the development of cybercrime legislation in line with technological advancements while maintaining its consistency with the objectives of Islamic law, and conducting further comparative and field studies on cybercrime and the level of legal and Sharia awareness related to it.*

**Keywords:** *Cybercrime, Islamic Law, Saudi Anti-Cybercrime Law, Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, Digital Rights*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid expansion of information and communication technologies has led to a significant increase in cybercrimes in recent years, creating legal and security challenges that require effective regulatory frameworks to address them. In this context, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia enacted the Anti-Cybercrime Law of 2007 to protect individuals, institutions, and public interests in the digital environment. Despite the importance of this law, there remains a need to examine the extent to which its objectives and provisions are consistent with the principles and objectives of Islamic law. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the Saudi Anti-Cybercrime Law, examine its relationship with Islamic Sharia, and highlight its role in protecting rights, safeguarding

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public interests, and promoting security and stability in the digital society.

The study aims to examine the relationship between the Saudi Anti-Cybercrime Law of 2007 and Islamic law by analyzing their objectives and provisions and assessing their consistency with the principles and objectives of Islamic law. It also sought to clarify the Sharia foundations for the criminalization of cybercrimes and to highlight the role of the law in protecting rights, safeguarding public interests, and promoting security and stability in the contemporary digital environment. The key concepts and their definitions include:

1. Crime Linguistic Definition Crime: Linguistically, refers to sin, wrongdoing, and offense. It also denotes transgression and the commission of acts that are condemned by Islamic law or social custom. Additionally, it signifies unlawful gain and bearing responsibility for the consequences of the committed act.<sup>5</sup>
2. Crime in Islamic Law: From the perspective of Islamic law, a crime is defined as a legal prohibition that Allah has forbidden, for which a prescribed punishment or a discretionary penalty is assigned. It is the commission of a prohibited act or the omission of a commanded act for which Islamic law specifies a punishment. Many jurists have defined crimes as “legal prohibitions that Allah Almighty has prohibited with a prescribed punishment or discretionary penalty.”<sup>6</sup>
3. *Siyāsah Shar‘iyyah*: *Siyāsah Shar‘iyyah* refers to the measures, policies, and decisions undertaken by the ruler or governing authority to achieve public welfare and prevent harm in accordance with the objectives and general principles of Islamic Sharia, even in matters for which no specific textual ruling exists, provided that such measures do not contradict the provisions of Sharia.<sup>7</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive and comparative approach to analyze the relationship between the Saudi Anti-Cybercrime Law of 2007 and Islamic law. It is based on analyzing the objectives and provisions of the law and comparing them with the principles, directives, and prohibitions found in Islamic law through the examination of relevant legal and religious texts. The study relies on textual sources, including the Saudi Anti-Cybercrime Law of 2007 and the views of classical and contemporary Muslim jurists and scholars. The scope of the study is limited to analyzing the objectives of the law and the cybercrimes it addresses and comparing them with the provisions of Islamic law in order to determine the extent of consistency between them. The study also employs descriptive analysis and comparison between legal and religious texts without the use of empirical data, surveys, or statistical methods.

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<sup>5</sup> Muḥammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1994), 12. Academy of the Arabic Language, *Al-Mu‘jam al-Wasīf*, 4th ed. (Cairo: Al-Shorouk International Library, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Awdah, *Islamic Criminal Legislation Compared with Positive Law* (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-Risālah, 2000). Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, *Crime and Punishment in Islamic Jurisprudence* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Siyāsah al-Shar‘iyyah fī Iṣlāḥ al-Rā‘ī wa al-Ra‘iyyah* (Riyadh: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Da‘wah and Guidance, 1998). Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Al-Turuq al-Ḥukmiyyah fī al-Siyāsah al-Shar‘iyyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1995).

## DISCUSSION OF CRIME IN ISLAMIC LAW

Crime in Islamic law is defined as any prohibited act or omission of a religious obligation for which Islamic law prescribes a specific punishment, whether a fixed punishment (*ḥadd*) or a discretionary punishment (*ta'zīr*). Islamic jurists have defined crime as a legal prohibition that Allah has forbidden and for which He has prescribed a *ḥadd* or *ta'zīr* punishment. This includes acts that constitute an infringement upon the essential interests that Islamic law seeks to preserve, namely religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property.<sup>8</sup>

Crimes in Islamic jurisprudence are divided into positive acts, which involve committing prohibited actions such as murder, adultery, and theft, and negative acts, which involve failing to perform obligations mandated by Islamic law when a specific punishment is prescribed for such omission. Accordingly, an act or omission is not considered a crime in the Islamic legal framework unless there is a legal text indicating its prohibition or obligation and Islamic law prescribes an appropriate punishment for its violation.<sup>9</sup>

Islam views crime as a social phenomenon associated with human behavior and the human tendency toward error and deviation. Therefore, Islamic legislation is not limited to punishment alone; rather, it combines prevention, reform, and punishment in a manner that protects society, preserves the interests of its members, and prevents corruption and harm to others.<sup>10</sup>

### Islam's Methodology in Dealing with Crime

Islam approaches crime through a comprehensive vision of both the individual and society, aiming to achieve human welfare in this world and the Hereafter and to protect the essential necessities that Islamic law seeks to preserve, which are religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. From the Islamic perspective, crime represents a violation of the provisions of Sharia and an infringement upon these fundamental interests, thereby threatening the security and stability of society. Consequently, Islamic law is not limited to prescribing punishments; rather, it establishes an integrated system for crime prevention, reducing its causes, and addressing its consequences.<sup>11</sup>

The Islamic approach to combating crime is founded upon the principles of justice, the prevention of oppression, and the protection of rights. The Holy Qur'an emphasizes that the establishment of justice is one of the primary objectives of the divine messages. Allah SWT says in the Qur'an 57:25: "Indeed, We sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and with them We sent down the Scripture and the balance of justice so that people may uphold justice." In Islam, justice is not merely a moral value, it is the foundation of the social and legal order through which rights are safeguarded, freedoms are protected, and grievances are redressed. Therefore, Islamic law has established rules that prohibit violations against life, property, honor, and privacy, while prescribing appropriate penalties for those who infringe upon these rights.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> 'Awdah, *Islamic Criminal Legislation Compared with Positive Law*. Abū Zahrah, *Crime and Punishment in Islamic Jurisprudence*.

<sup>9</sup> Al-Māwardī, *Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah wa al-Wilāyāt al-Dīniyyah*. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Siyāsah al-Shar'iyyah fī Islāḥ al-Rā'ī wa al-Ra'iyyah*.

<sup>10</sup> 'Awdah, *Islamic Criminal Legislation Compared with Positive Law*. Abū Zahrah, *Crime and Punishment in Islamic Jurisprudence*. Al-Māwardī, *Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah wa al-Wilāyāt al-Dīniyyah*. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Siyāsah al-Shar'iyyah fī Islāḥ al-Rā'ī wa al-Ra'iyyah*.

<sup>11</sup> Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā al-Shāṭibī, *Al-Muwāfaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Sharī'ah* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1997). Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī, *Al-Mustasfā fī 'Ilm al-Uṣūl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr, *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah al-Islāmiyyah* (Amman: Dār al-Nafā'is, 2001). Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Evidences* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1989).

Islamic legislation is distinguished by its combination of prevention and treatment in addressing crime. Prevention occupies a prominent position within Islamic criminal policy, as Sharia seeks to address the factors leading to deviant behavior before crimes occur. This is achieved through strengthening sound faith, promoting moral values, developing individual and social responsibility, and fostering respect for the rights of others. Acts of worship also contribute to the development of moral conscience and self-restraint, encouraging individuals to avoid criminal behavior out of reverence for Allah and a desire to attain His pleasure.<sup>13</sup>

The family represents the first institution responsible for shaping the individual's character and protecting him from deviant behavior. Islamic teachings place great emphasis on the family because of its central role in instilling religious and moral values in children. Education based on honesty, trustworthiness, respect, and responsibility contributes to the development of balanced individuals capable of distinguishing between lawful and unlawful conduct and adhering to legal and moral obligations. Consequently, the family serves as the first line of defense in crime prevention and the promotion of social security.

Alongside prevention, Islamic law establishes a penal system aimed at protecting society, deterring offenders, and achieving justice. Punishment in Islam is founded upon the principles of fairness, proportionality, and the avoidance of arbitrariness. Penalties are imposed only after the crime has been proven through valid legal evidence and after the necessary safeguards for justice have been fulfilled. Furthermore, the purpose of punishment is not merely to inflict pain upon the offender but also to reform him, prevent recidivism, achieve general deterrence, and safeguard the interests of society.<sup>14</sup>

Islamic jurisprudence has recognized that the development of human life inevitably gives rise to new forms of crime that were unknown in earlier periods. Therefore, the ruler is granted the authority to enact regulations and procedures necessary to protect society and promote the public interest within the framework of *siyāsah shar'īyyah* or Islamic public policy. This authority is grounded in the objectives of Sharia and its general principles, which seek to preserve rights, prevent corruption, and maintain security and stability. From this perspective, modern regulations concerning cybercrime may be viewed as an extension of the general principles established by Islamic law to protect individuals and societies from various forms of harm and aggression, in a manner consistent with contemporary technological developments.<sup>15</sup>

In conclusion, Islam's methodology in dealing with crime is based on an integrated framework that combines education, prevention, deterrence, and punishment, all aimed at achieving justice, protecting rights, and preserving public interests. This methodology is characterized by its flexibility and capacity to address contemporary developments, ensuring the continued relevance and effectiveness of Islamic Sharia in confronting emerging forms of crime, including cybercrime.

## Justice and Fairness from an Islamic Perspective

Justice is one of the greatest principles upon which Islamic law is founded and one of the primary objectives that Islamic rulings seek to achieve in the lives of individuals and societies. The command to uphold justice is repeatedly emphasized throughout the Holy

<sup>13</sup> Al-Shātibī, *Al-Muwāfaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Sharī'ah*. Yusuf al-Qaradawī, *The General Characteristics of Islam* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Ibrāhīm ibn 'Alī Ibn Farḥūn, *Tabṣirat al-Ḥukkām fī Uṣūl al-Aqḍiyah wa Manāhij al-Aḥkām* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2007). Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Evidences*.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Qayyim, *Al-Turuq al-Ḥukmiyyah fī al-Siyāsah al-Shar'īyyah*. Ibn 'Ashūr, *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah al-Islāmiyyah*.

Qur'an, reflecting its central position in Islam. Allah SWT says in the Qur'an 16:90: "Indeed, Allah commands justice and excellence" and He also says in the Qur'an 4:58: "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people, judge with justice." Justice means giving every person his or her due right without excess or deficiency and placing matters in their proper positions in accordance with the principles of Islamic law. For this reason, scholars have regarded justice as the foundation of human civilization and a cornerstone for social, political, and economic stability and security.<sup>16</sup>

The concept of justice in Islam is closely connected to the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāsid al-sharī'ah*). Islamic rulings aim to preserve religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property, and these objectives cannot be achieved except within a system founded upon justice and equality among people. Justice is not limited to judicial decisions and the resolution of disputes; rather, it encompasses all aspects of life, including social, economic, political, and administrative relations. Furthermore, Islamic law prohibits all forms of oppression, discrimination, and violations of rights, while requiring the protection of the vulnerable, the support of the oppressed, and the restoration of rights to their rightful owners regardless of status, affiliation, or social position.<sup>17</sup>

The establishment of justice is one of the most important responsibilities of the ruler and state institutions within the Islamic system. Authority in Islam is not an end in itself but a means of serving public interests, protecting rights, and ensuring justice among people. Islamic jurists have emphasized that the legitimacy and stability of governance are directly linked to its ability to achieve justice and safeguard both public and private rights. Accordingly, Islamic Sharia has established principles that prevent the abuse of power and guarantee equality among members of society before legal and judicial rulings, thereby ensuring social security and stability.<sup>18</sup>

Islamic law protects individuals' personal, financial, and moral rights by prohibiting any violation of life, property, honor, and privacy. It also upholds equality before the law and guarantees fair legal procedures, ensuring a balance between protecting society and safeguarding individual rights.<sup>19</sup>

Justice and fairness are central Islamic principles that also apply to contemporary challenges such as cybercrime. Protecting privacy, personal data, and digital rights, and preventing unauthorized access to electronic systems, are consistent with the objectives of Islamic law in preserving rights, preventing harm, and ensuring security. Therefore, cybercrime laws represent a modern application of these Islamic principles in the digital environment.

Hence, justice and fairness in the Islamic perspective are not merely moral values; they constitute the foundation of legislation, governance, and social relations. They also provide the reference framework upon which laws and regulations are based to protect rights and maintain security and stability in accordance with the objectives of Islamic law and the interests of humanity across different times and places.

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<sup>16</sup> Al-Shātibī, *Al-Muwāfaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Sharī'ah*, 243.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Mustasfā fī 'Ilm al-Uṣūl*, 153. Aḥmad al-Raysūnī, *The Theory of Maqāsid According to Imām Al-Shātibī*, 74.

<sup>18</sup> Al-Māwardī, *Al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah wa al-Wilāyāt al-Dīniyyah*, 65. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Siyāsah al-Sharī'iyah fī Iṣlāḥ al-Rā'ī wa al-Ra'īyyah*, 87.

<sup>19</sup> Aḥmad ibn Idrīs al-Qarāfī, *Al-Furūq* (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1998). Al-Zuḥaylī, *Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Evidences*, 95.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE SAUDI ANTI-CYBERCRIME LAW

### 1. Achieving Information Security

The Saudi Anti-Cybercrime Law aims to enhance information security and protect individuals and institutions from risks arising from the unlawful use of modern technologies.<sup>20</sup> The protection of information and electronic systems has become a fundamental necessity due to the increasing reliance on digital technologies in various aspects of life. This objective is consistent with the objectives of Islamic law, which emphasize the importance of maintaining security and safeguarding the interests of individuals and society. Security is regarded as a fundamental requirement for social stability and the protection of rights and property. Furthermore, ensuring security and preventing harm and corruption are among the responsibilities assigned to the state under Islamic law.<sup>21</sup>

### 2. Protecting Rights Arising from the Legitimate Use of Computers and Information Networks

The law identifies the protection of rights arising from the legitimate use of computers and information networks as one of its primary objectives of Saudi Anti-Cybercrime Law, 2007. Islamic law emphasizes the protection of rights and prohibits all forms of unlawful infringement, whether related to individuals, property, or legitimate interests. This objective is therefore consistent with Islamic principles that require respect for the rights of others and prohibit any form of violation, thereby promoting justice and preserving public interests.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. Protecting Public Interest, Morals, and Public Ethics

The law seeks to protect public interest, morals, and public ethics from harmful electronic practices that may threaten social stability and societal values.<sup>23</sup> The protection of public interest is one of the major objectives of Islamic law, which aims to secure benefits, prevent harm, and preserve the five essential necessities; religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. Islamic teachings also stress the importance of maintaining moral values and public ethics as foundations for social cohesion and stability. Accordingly, this objective is in harmony with the principles of Islamic law, which seek to protect society and preserve its moral and ethical values.<sup>24</sup>

### 4. Protecting the National Economy

The law considers the protection of the national economy to be one of its key objectives by combating cybercrimes that may target financial assets, transactions, or economic institutions.<sup>25</sup> This objective is consistent with the objectives of Islamic law, which emphasize the protection of wealth as one of the five essential necessities. Islamic law prohibits all forms of unlawful interference with public and private property and regards

<sup>20</sup> Saudi Arabia, *Anti-Cybercrime Law*, Royal Decree No. M/17, 8 March 2007, 54.

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Siyāsah al-Shar‘iyyah fī Iṣlāḥ al-Rā‘ī wa al-Ra‘iyyah*, 176. Al-Māwardī, *Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah wa al-Wilāyāt al-Dīniyyah*, 254.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Zuhaylī, *Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Evidences*, 154. Al-Qarāfī, *Al-Furūq*, 236.

<sup>23</sup> Saudi Arabia, *Anti-Cybercrime Law*.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Mustasfā fī ‘Ilm al-Uṣūl*, 214. Al-Shāṭibī, *Al-Muwāfaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Sharī‘ah*, 154. Al-Raysūnī, *The Theory of Maqāsid According to Imām Al-Shāṭibī*, 98.

<sup>25</sup> Saudi Arabia, *Anti-Cybercrime Law*.

actions that threaten economic stability as forms of corruption that must be prevented. Therefore, protecting the national economy from cybercrime represents a contemporary application of the Islami law's objective of preserving wealth and promoting public welfare.<sup>26</sup>

The development of modern technology has made possible all forms of eavesdropping, including photography and recording, using fixed and moving cameras, mobile phones, computers, and network hacking. This poses a threat to individuals' privacy.<sup>27</sup> Islamic law prohibits all forms of eavesdropping, as stated in the Qur'an 49:12: *"And do not spy or backbite each other."* Rasulullah SAW also said: *"Beware of suspicion. Suspicion is the most untrue speech. Do not spy and do not eavesdrop. Do not compete with each other and do not envy each other and do not hate each other and do not shun each other. Be slaves of Allah, brothers."* The criminalization of eavesdropping under the Saudi Anti-Cybercrime Law of 2007 is consistent with Islamic law,<sup>28</sup> which criminalizes the violation of the privacy of individuals in their homes or workplaces, or the unauthorized access to information networks, computers, or mobile phones to obtain text, audio, or visual information, or to record conversations, or to take photographs or video of an individual or group without permission.

Blackmail is defined as forcing someone to pay a material or financial reward by threatening to publish personal information, photos, or videos containing sexual material, whether it is the person's own or shared with another person or group. This type of blackmail has become widespread due to technological advancements that have facilitated it. Blackmail and threats in all their forms are prohibited in Islamic law because they constitute criminal behaviour that includes violating the rights and privacy of others, including their honour and dignity. Allah SWT says in the Qur'an 24:19: *"Indeed, those who like that immorality should be spread or publicized among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And Allah knows and you do not know."*

Moreover, the prevalence of such behaviour in Muslim society exposes many to social isolation for fear of the publication of obscene content. This leads to feelings of frustration and despair, which ultimately weakens Muslim society. This contradicts the objectives of Islamic law, which seek to harness the energies of community members for the benefit of the nation's progress and prosperity. In this regard, the Anti-Cybercrime Law of 2007 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is consistent with Islamic law in criminalizing blackmail and threats.<sup>29</sup>

Electronic forgery and destruction are the most prevalent cybercrimes worldwide. Forgery is defined as altering or substituting facts to appear different from their original form, using various forms, with the intent to harm an individual, group, institution, or government, or to achieve a personal or collective benefit, whether material, financial, or moral.<sup>30</sup>

The prohibition of forgery has been mentioned in numerous verses and hadiths of the Prophet SAW with various meanings. Allah SWT says in the Qur'an 2:79: *"So woe*

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<sup>26</sup> Ibn 'Ashūr, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah al-Islāmiyyah*, 87. Al-Zuhaylī, *Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Evidences*, 354. Al-Shātibī, *Al-Muwāfaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Sharī'ah*, 153.

<sup>27</sup> Muhammad Abdullah et al., "Evolution Cybercrime: Key Trends, Cybersecurity Threats, and Mitigation Strategies from Historical Data," *Analytics* 4, no. 3 (2025): 25.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Siyāsah al-Sharī'iyah fī Islāh al-Rā'ī wa al-Ra'īyyah*, 75. Al-Zuhaylī, *Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Evidences*, 325.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Qarāfī, *Al-Furūq*, 124. Al-Zuhaylī, *Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Evidences*, 324.

<sup>30</sup> Hashem Balas, Reem Shatnawi, Nashat Mohammad Bani Hamad, and Mamoon Suliman Alsmadi, "The Crime of Electronic Forgery in Jordanian Criminal Legislation," *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences* 23, no. 1 (2025): 4267–4277.

to those who write the scripture with their own hands, then say, this is from Allah, in order to exchange it for a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn.” Also, Qur’an 2:59: “But those who wronged changed those words to a statement other than that which had been said to them, so We sent down upon those who wronged a punishment from the sky because they were defiantly disobeying.” Likewise, Qur’an 22:30: “So shun the impurity of idolatry and shun words of falsehood.” On the authority of Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman RA, Rasulullah SAW said: “Whoever deceives us is not one of us. He, Prophet SAW, also said: Shall I not inform you of the greatest of the major sins? We said: Yes, Rasulullah.” He said: Associating partners with Allah and disobeying parents. He was reclining, then he sat up and said: Beware of false speech and false testimony! Beware of false speech and false testimony. He kept repeating it until I said: He will not be silent.”

Electronic destruction is the destruction, removal, distortion, or disruption of content stored within the computer, whether it includes programs or data, with the aim of harming individuals or entities concerned with the content to be destroyed. As stated above, the Saudi Arabia Anti-Cybercrime Law of 2007 is consistent with Islamic law in criminalizing forgery and destruction in their various forms,<sup>31</sup> due to the harm they cause to individuals and societies.

Islamic law addresses privacy by preserving the sanctity of private life. Technological advancements have contributed to the spread of behaviours and behaviours related to violating the privacy of others. In this regard, electronic privacy violation is defined as the manipulation of information of individuals or institutions stored on electronic devices, including computers and mobile phones, without permission by an individual, group, or entity. According to this definition, electronic privacy, in its general sense, refers to all electronic data and information belonging to an individual that he or she does not wish others to see. Therefore, violating this privacy is a crime punishable by law.<sup>32</sup>

In this context, Islamic law prohibits any violation of electronic privacy. This prohibition is contained in the Holy Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Allah Almighty says in the Qur’an 17:36: “Do not follow what you have no sure knowledge of. Indeed, all will be called to account for their hearing, sight, and intellect.” The Prophet SAW said: “If a man were to look at you without permission, and you were to throw a pebble at him and put out his eye, there would be no blame on you.” Prophet SAW also said: “Part of a person’s excellent Islam is his leaving alone that which does not concern him.”

Based on the above, the Saudi Anti-Cybercrime Law of 2007 is consistent with Islamic law in criminalizing the unlawful violation of others’ privacy.<sup>33</sup> The widespread use of the internet has led to the spread of defamation crimes, especially on social media. Islamic law deals with defamation using other terms, including slander and insults, which generally refer to anything that harms a person’s honour and reputation. Islamic law prohibits defaming others, even if the defamatory material is true, in which case it should be covered up.

Allah SWT says in the Qur’an 49:12: “O believers! Avoid many suspicions, for indeed, some suspicions are sinful. And do not spy, nor backbite one another. Would any

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<sup>31</sup> ‘Awdah, *Islamic Criminal Legislation Compared with Positive Law*, 87. Abū Zahrah, *Crime and Punishment in Islamic Jurisprudence*, 65.

<sup>32</sup> Istianah Zainal Asyiqin, M. Fabian Akbar, and Manuel Beltrán Genovés, “Cryptocurrency as a Medium of Rupiah Exchange: Perspective Sharia Islamic Law and Jurisprudential Analysis,” *Volksgeist: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum dan Konstitusi* 7, no. 2 (2024): 227–292.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Siyāsah al-Shar‘iyyah fī Iṣlāḥ al-Rā‘ī wa al-Ra‘iyyah*, 65. Al-Qarāfi, *Al-Furūq*, 173.

*of you like to eat the flesh of their dead brother? You would despise that! And fear Allah. Surely Allah is the Acceptor of Repentance, Most Merciful.”* And Qur’an 24:23: *“Surely those who accuse chaste, unsuspecting, believing women are cursed in this life and the Hereafter. And they will suffer a tremendous punishment.”* Thus, the Saudi Arabia Anti-Cybercrime Law of 2007 is consistent with Islamic law in prohibiting and criminalizing defamation in all its forms.<sup>34</sup>

## **CYBER FRAUD, IMPERSONATION, AND UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS**

This article criminalizes fraud, impersonation, and unauthorized access to information, data, programs, or systems. Electronic fraud is the intentional use of illegal methods to obtain information and data stored on a computer. This also includes unauthorized entry of information and data, tampering with commands during programming, and other means that affect the computer for the purpose of obtaining an illicit benefit and harming others. More specifically, fraud is: *“Unlawfully obtaining a material benefit for oneself or others, by employing fraudulent means deception or using a false name or an incorrect identity.”*<sup>35</sup>

Islamic law prohibits fraud in all its forms and methods. The Prophet SAW said: *“Whoever cheats us is not one of us, and deceit and trickery are in the Fire.”* Since the provisions of Islamic law are focused on preserving the five interests or objectives, which are religion, life, reason, offspring, and wealth, the crime of electronic fraud in all its forms threatens these five interests.<sup>36</sup>

The crime of cyber impersonation is part of the crime of fraud. It is defined as the use of someone’s personal data to obtain money, information, data, or documents to which they are not entitled. The difference between the two crimes is that cyber impersonation uses obscure methods, while fraud is based on deception and fraud against the targeted person or entity. Islamic law prohibits cyber impersonation in all its forms,<sup>37</sup> considering it a type of fraud, as stated in the crime of cyber fraud.<sup>38</sup>

Unauthorized access refers to entering banking, credit, or financial data for the purpose of obtaining funds or services provided by the stolen data. Unauthorized access to a system, program, file, or data falls under the crime of theft and embezzlement. Therefore, it is prohibited in Islamic law.<sup>39</sup> Allah SAW says in the Qur’an 2:188: *“Do not consume one another’s wealth unjustly, nor deliberately bribe authorities in order to devour a portion of others’ property, knowing that it is a sin.”* The Prophet SAW said: *“Whoever unlawfully takes a Muslim’s property will meet Allah Almighty while He is angry with him.”* The punishment for theft is a deterrent that matches the heinousness of the crime. Therefore, Allah SWT says in the Qur’an 5:38: *“As for male and female thieves, cut off their hands for what they have done, a deterrent from Allah. And Allah is Almighty,*

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<sup>34</sup> Al-Zuhaylī, *Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Evidences*, 342. Abū Zahrah, *Crime and Punishment in Islamic Jurisprudence*, 87.

<sup>35</sup> M. Waliullah et al., “Assessing the Influence of Cybersecurity Threats and Risks on the Adoption and Growth of Digital Banking: A Systematic Literature Review,” *Journal of Cybersecurity and Privacy* 5, no. 2 (2025): 1–32.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Awdah, *Islamic Criminal Legislation Compared with Positive Law*, 253. Al-Māwardī, *Al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah wa al-Wilāyāt al-Dīniyyah*, 254.

<sup>37</sup> Abd al-Qadir ‘Awdah, *Islamic Criminal Legislation Compared with Positive Law*, p. 163; Al-Zuhayli, Wahbah, *Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Evidences*, p. 165.

<sup>38</sup> Saad M. Saad, Hameed H. Abdullah, and Nadher K. Mohammed, “Cyber Fraud: Legal Challenges and Criminal Liability in the Digital Environment,” *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications* 15, no. 4 2024: 515–526.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Mawardi, Ali ibn Muhammad, *Al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah wa al-Wilāyat al-Dīniyyah*, p. 265; Ahmad ibn ‘Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Siyasah al-Shar‘iyyah fī Islah al-Ra‘i wa al-Ra‘iyyah*, 143.

*All-Wise.*” The Prophet SAW became angry when Usāmah bin Zayd RA interceded for him on behalf of a woman who was proven guilty of theft, and she was sentenced to the punishment for theft, which was the cutting off of her hand. He said: “*Those who came before you were destroyed because they carried out the punishment on the lowly and left the noble. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if Fatima had done that, I would have cut off her hand.*”

## **CRIMES OF UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS TO PRIVATE DATA, SUSPENSION OF THE INFORMATION NETWORK, AND OBSTRUCTION OF ACCESS TO SERVICES**

This article consists of two crimes, as outlined below:

### **1. The Crime of Unauthorized Access to Private Data**

Cyberhacking is a new phenomenon that has spread because of growing technological development. This phenomenon has been associated with specialists who are experts in computer science and programming. This crime is also the launching pad for most cybercrimes. Simply unauthorized access to a computer network system is a crime, because the person or entity committing this access knows they are not authorized to enter without the permission of the system’s supervisor. Furthermore, obtaining data through unauthorized access, and deleting, destroying, leaking, damaging, altering, or republishing it, is another crime punishable by law.<sup>40</sup>

Unauthorized access to websites is called “hacking,” and refers to unlawful access to a computer to gain access to its network, systems, programs, and documents. The person or entity hacking may use advanced software to gain access, with the intent of misusing or obtaining benefits by sabotaging, stealing, spying on, deleting, or destroying information and data.<sup>41</sup>

Hacking, or unauthorized access to websites, is a crime from the perspective of Islamic law, particularly since it is a compound crime, encompassing the crimes of theft and espionage, both of which are prohibited by Islamic law. Hacking is also an assault on the rights of others, which is prohibited by Islamic law, as stated in the Qur’an 2:190: “*Fight in the cause of Allah only against those who wage war against you, but do not exceed the limits. Allah does not like transgressors.*” The Prophet SAW also said: “*Everything of a Muslim is sacred to another Muslim: his blood, his property, and his honour.*” He also said: “*There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm.*” Jurists have unanimously agreed that it is impermissible to infringe upon the money, rights, and property of others by any means, including electronic means.<sup>42</sup>

Electronic hacking with the aim of seizing control of others’ websites constitutes unlawful usurpation of another’s rights under Islamic law. Concerning this, the Prophet SAW said: “*None of you should take the property of his brother, whether seriously or in jest. If one of you takes his brother’s stick, let him return it.*” He also said: “*The hand is responsible for what it has taken until it returns it.*”

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<sup>40</sup> Fatima Asif, Fatima Sohail, Zuhair Hussain Butt, Faiz Nasir, and Nida Asgar, “Ethical Hacking and Its Role in Cybersecurity,” *International Journal of Computer Science and Information Security* 22, no. 8 2024: 1–12.

<sup>41</sup> Narsimha G. Shukla, S. Ramesh, P. Venkata Rao, and K. Srinivasa Rao, “Cyber Hacking: Threats, Challenges, and Security Measures,” *International Journal of Computer Science and Network Security*

<sup>42</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Siyāsah al-Shar‘īyah fī Iṣlāḥ al-Rā‘ī wa al-Ra‘īyah*, 321. Ibn Qayyim, *Al-Turuq al-Ḥukmiyyah fī al-Siyāsah al-Shar‘īyah*, 312.

## **2. The Crimes of Disrupting the Internet and Obstructing Access to Services**

Cybercrimes pose a serious threat to the interests of states and societies alike. Given the reliance of governments, private and public institutions, and ordinary individuals on the Internet for many aspects of life, disrupting the Internet by any means is a crime under Islamic law because it harms the interests of the country and its people. Furthermore, such crimes are considered crimes of corruption on earth.<sup>43</sup> For example, medical devices, such as those used in intensive care units, are now heavily connected to the Internet. Therefore, intentionally disrupting the network could cause these devices to stop working and possibly lead to the death of patients using them, and this constitutes manslaughter.<sup>44</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis of the Saudi Anti-Cybercrime Law and its comparison with the principles and objectives of Islamic law, the study identified several findings confirming their compatibility. It also proposed recommendations to strengthen cybercrime prevention efforts and support future research in this field. The study revealed a clear compatibility between the Saudi Anti-Cybercrime Law of 2007 and the principles of Islamic law and its general objectives in protecting rights, safeguarding interests, and preventing harm. The study demonstrated that Islamic law adopts a comprehensive approach to combat crime based on prevention, reform, and deterrence, rather than relying solely on punishment, thereby contributing to social security and stability. The study found that the principles of justice and fairness upon which Islamic Shariah is founded extend to the protection of privacy, data, and digital rights in the contemporary electronic environment. The study concluded that the objectives of the Anti-Cybercrime Law namely the protection of information security, digital rights, public interest, and the national economy are consistent with the objectives of Islamic Shariah, particularly the preservation of wealth, rights, security, and morality.

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<sup>43</sup> Al-Shātibī, *Al-Muwāfaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Sharī‘ah*, 176. Ibn ‘Āshūr, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah al-Islāmiyyah*, 165.

<sup>44</sup> Nacem AllahRakha, *Cybercrime and the Legal and Ethical Challenges of Emerging Technologies*, 134.

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