

Negotiating *Mahr* as a Woman's Right in Islamic Marriage: A Normative–Comparative Study of Nigeria and Indonesia

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Abstract	<i>Mahr (dowry) serves as a fundamental institution in Islamic marriage law and represents a legally recognized economic right of women, grounded in Qur'anic injunctions and Islamic Law. Despite sharing a common normative foundation, the regulation and practical enforcement of mahr vary considerably across Muslim societies, particularly those characterized by legal pluralism and differing levels of state codification. This article examines mahr as a women's right within Islamic family law through a normative-comparative analysis of Nigeria and Indonesia. Employing doctrinal legal research and a comparative law approach, the study analyzes the concept of mahr in Islamic jurisprudence and its regulation within the respective Islamic family law frameworks of both countries. The findings reveal that both Nigeria and Indonesia recognize mahr as a mandatory obligation of the husband and the exclusive proprietary right of the wife. However, significant divergences emerge in terms of regulatory structure, institutional enforcement, and legal certainty. In Nigeria, Islamic family law operates within a plural legal system where Islamic law—predominantly influenced by the Maliki school—coexists with customary and statutory laws, resulting in fragmented enforcement and uneven protection of women's mahr rights. By contrast, Indonesia has incorporated Islamic family law into a more unified statutory framework through Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage and the Compilation of Islamic Law, supported by the jurisdiction of Religious Courts, thereby providing relatively clearer mechanisms for legal enforcement, notwithstanding ongoing challenges related to customary practices and implementation. This comparative analysis demonstrates that legal codification, institutional coherence, and state involvement play a crucial role in enhancing legal certainty and strengthening the protection of women's economic rights in marriage.</i>
Keywords	<i>Mahr, Dowry, Gender Justice, Women's Rights, Islamic Family Law</i>

Introduction

Marriage in Islam is a legal and social institution that has both religious and social dimensions, aiming to form a family based on peace, love, and sustainability (Hadikusuma, 2022; Sebyar, 2023). One of the legal consequences of a marriage contract is the obligation for the prospective husband to give dowry or bride price (*mahr*) to the prospective wife. The *mahr* has a strong normative basis in the Qur'an and Hadith and is consistently recognized in *fiqh* as the full right of the wife (Zulaikha, 2024). The existence of *mahr* not only reflects the legitimacy of the marriage contract, but also affirms the principles of justice, respect, and protection of women's rights in Islamic family law (Hilmy & Utami, 2021; Jafar et al., 2024).

In practice, the regulation and implementation of *mahr* are greatly influenced by the national legal system and the socio-cultural context of each country. Indonesia accommodates Islamic law in its national legal system through Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage (Marriage Law) and the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI), which places *mahr* as a legal obligation with an emphasis on the principles of simplicity and agreement between the parties (Hadikusuma, 2022; Yuliatin & Ahmad, 2024). Meanwhile, Nigeria, as a federal state, implements a system of legal pluralism that allows Islamic law, customary law, and civil law to coexist. In northern Nigeria, where Sharia law is applied, dowries often interact with customary law practices, giving rise to variations in their form, value, and mechanism of determination (Kannike & Ismail, 2023; Oyelade & Abuloye, 2023).

A number of previous studies in Nigeria have examined *mahr* within the framework of Islamic family law, focusing on the relationship between Islamic law and customary law (Idoko, 2024; Kannike & Ismail, 2023; Oyelade & Abuloye, 2023). These studies show that in Nigerian Muslim society, particularly among the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group, *mahr* is often positioned not solely as an individual right of women, but also as a social instrument involving the interests of the extended family (Asagba et al., 2025; Sanni et al., 2024). These findings indicate a shift in the normative meaning of *mahr* due to the influence of social structures and local customs or practices.

In Indonesia, studies on *mahr* generally focus on the normative aspects of positive law and its implementation in marriage practices. Several studies confirm that the Compilation of Islamic Law provides flexibility in determining the form and value of *mahr*, as long as it is based on the principle of agreement and does not burden the prospective husband (Afadi et al., 2025; Latupono, 2024). Other studies reveal that in social practice, *mahrs* in Indonesia tend to be symbolized by religion, administration, and local customs, so that their economic function is not always prominent (Ash-Shabah et al., 2021; Avita et al., 2022; Efrinaldi et al., 2022; Hilmy & Utami, 2021; Zulaikha, 2024). However, these studies are still limited to the national context and have not been comparatively linked to practices in other Muslim countries, particularly Nigeria.

Although studies on *mahr* have been conducted in both Nigeria and Indonesia, research that specifically examines *mahr* through a cross-country normative-comparative approach is still relatively limited. Most previous studies have been descriptive and contextual in nature, without systematic comparative analysis of the legal arrangements and normative concepts of *mahr* in Islamic family law. Therefore, this study offers something new by conducting a normative comparison between Nigeria and Indonesia, in order to identify similarities, differences, and characteristics of *mahr* or dowry/bride price arrangements in two different Islamic family law systems.

Based on this background, the research questions in this study are: what is the concept of *mahr* in Islamic law, how is *mahr* regulated in Islamic family law in Nigeria

and Indonesia, and what are the similarities and differences in the regulation of *mahr* in the two countries? This study aims to analyze the normative concept of dowry in Islamic law, compare its regulation in Nigerian and Indonesian Islamic family law, and contribute academically to the development of comparative Islamic law studies. This research is important because the results of the study are expected to enrich the discourse on Islamic family law, provide a comparative perspective for policymakers and academics, and serve as a reference in efforts to strengthen the protection of women's rights through Islamic marriage law instruments.

Research methods

This study is a normative legal study with a comparative law approach (Benuf & Azhar, 2020). This study examines the concept of *mahr* in Islamic law and its regulation in Islamic family law in Nigeria and Indonesia based on applicable legal norms. A comparative law approach is used to identify similarities and differences in the regulation of *mahr* in both legal systems, whether derived from Islamic law or the positive law of each country (Al Abiad & Masadeh, 2024). Primary legal materials include the Qur'an, Hadith, and opinions of Islamic jurisprudence scholars (*fuqaha*), the Marriage Law and Compilation of Islamic Law, as well as relevant regulations in Nigeria. Secondary legal materials include national and international books and journal articles discussing *mahr* and Islamic family law. All legal materials were analyzed qualitatively using normative comparison techniques and presented descriptively and analytically (Disemadi, 2022).

Results and Discussion

The Concept of *Mahr* in Islamic Family Law

In Islamic marriage jurisprudence, dowry or bride price (*mahr*) is understood as a mandatory gift from the prospective husband to the prospective wife as a legal consequence of the marriage contract. Terminologically, *fuqaha* use the terms *sadaq*, *mahr*, or *faridah* to refer to the property or benefits that become the right of women as a result of a valid marriage (Sudarto, 2021). The *mahr* is not a reward for the contract, but rather a form of recognition of the legal position and dignity of women in the institution of marriage (Okumus & Gümüş, 2025; Syahbib, 2025). Therefore, ownership of the *mahr* rests entirely with the wife and cannot be contested by any other party.

The normative basis for the obligation of mahar is explicitly stated in the Qur'an Surah (QS.) al-Nisa' verse 4, which commands that *mahr* be given to women as a gift of goodwill.

وَاتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدُقَتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً فَإِنْ طِبْنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُوهُ هَنِيئًا مَرِيئًا

Meaning: "Give the women (whom you marry) their dowry as a gift of goodwill. Then, if they willingly give you part of it, accept it and enjoy it with pleasure." (QS. al-Nisa' [4]: 4).

This verse confirms that the *mahr* (*sadaq*) is a woman's right that is legally binding and cannot be taken back except with the wife's consent. In addition, provisions regarding *mahr* are also implied in other verses governing marital relations and the legal consequences of marriage, which indicate that dowry is an integral part of the Islamic family law system (Ahadi & Djazimah, 2020; Widayati, 2025).

The hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad *Peace Be Upon Him* (PBUH) reinforce the obligation and flexibility of *mahr* in Islamic marriage. In several hadiths, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH allowed *mahr* of modest value, even in the form of an iron ring or teaching verses from the Qur'an, as long as both parties agreed, as in the hadith narrated

by Bukhari (No. 5029) and Muslim (No. 1425). These hadiths emphasize that Islam does not set a minimum or maximum *mahr* limit rigidly, but rather emphasizes the principles of convenience, fairness, and agreement (Sahril, 2024; Taufiqotuzzahro' et al., 2024; Yenti et al., 2020). Thus, the *mahr* is positioned as a normative obligation that is also adaptive to social and economic conditions.

Classical scholars from various schools of thought agree on the obligation of *mahr*, although they differ in the details of its regulation. The Hanafi school views *mahr* as a consequence of the marriage contract that must be fulfilled, while the Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools emphasize that *mahr* is the right of women arising from a valid contract. Contemporary scholars, such as ibn Qudamah and al-Zuhayli, expand the discussion of *mahr* by emphasizing aspects of gender justice and the protection of women's rights, as well as criticizing social practices that make *mahr* an economic burden or a tool for family transactions (Muzainah et al., 2025; Nurnazli et al., 2024; Trigiyatno, 2021). This view shows the dynamics of *ijtihad* in understanding *mahr* as a legal institution that is responsive to the times.

Islamic marriage jurisprudence distinguishes dowry into two main categories, namely *mahr musamma* and *mahr mithl*. *Musamma* is a *mahr* that is clearly determined and agreed upon in the marriage contract, both in terms of form and value. Meanwhile, *mahr mithl* is a *mahr* determined based on the standard of fairness for women of the same type in their social environment if the *mahr* is not mentioned or the marriage contract takes place without determining the *mahr* (Asrory, 2020). This distinction reflects the flexibility of Islamic law in guaranteeing women's rights, while ensuring the validity of the *mahr* as a legal obligation even if it is not explicitly specified in the contract (Hilmy & Utami, 2021; Ridwan, 2020).

Functionally, the *mahr* plays a multidimensional role in Islamic marriage. In addition to serving as a symbol of the husband's sincerity and responsibility, the *mahr* also acts as an initial economic guarantee for the wife and an instrument for protecting women's rights. In the context of Islamic family law, the dowry strengthens women's bargaining position in marriage and serves as an indicator of the legitimacy and seriousness of the marriage contract (Syahbib, 2025). This function places the *mahr* not merely as a symbolic tradition, but as a legal instrument with juridical and social implications.

Normative Framework of *Mahr* in Nigeria's Islamic Family Law System

The legal community in Nigeria applies a pluralistic legal system, namely statutory or common law, customary law, and Muslim personal law (sharia/Muslim personal law) (Diala, 2020). In practice, Muslim family matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc., are often resolved according to sharia principles interpreted by *qadis* and sharia courts in various states (Abdulrahman, 2024; Oyelade & Abuloye, 2023), so that the normative framework of *mahr* must be understood in the context of this plurality and the overlap of authority between civil and sharia forums.

Islamic marriage law in Nigeria is generally influenced by the Maliki school of thought, which is widely practiced in the northern region (Oyelade & Abuloye, 2023). *Mahr* is considered an essential element of marriage, namely property or gifts that become the wife's right and a condition for the validity of the marriage contract according to many local practices. Normatively, *mahr* not only has symbolic value but also an economic protective function for women. *Mahr* is the property of women that cannot be forcibly taken by husbands and is one of the main claims of wives in the event of divorce or death of the husband (Idoko, 2024; Kannike & Ismail, 2023).

At the institutional level, enforcement of the right to *mahr* depends on access to Sharia courts, qadi practices, and marriage registration mechanisms, which often vary between states. Some states have a more systematic implementation of sharia, while others rely more on customary norms and local judges' decisions. Consistent lack of codification leads to significant variations in how the amount, confirmation, and execution of *mahr* obligations are adjudicated (Abdulrahman, 2024; Diala, 2020; Kannike & Ismail, 2023).

In socio-legal practice, several normative challenges arise: confusion between *mahr* and the tradition of "bride price"/dowry, which is not part of classical *fiqh*. Low rates of formal marriage registration, which weaken evidence for *mahr* claims, and social pressure that sometimes causes women to surrender or not enforce their *mahr* rights (Idoko, 2024; Ikuji & Kolade-Faseyi, 2021; Kannike & Ismail, 2023). This problem creates a gap between the theoretical norm of *mahr* as protection and the reality on the ground, where women's access to legal remedies is often limited.

The policy measures recommended in the literature are to strengthen the recording and formalization of marriage contracts so that the provisions of the *mahr* are legally recorded, to increase the capacity of sharia courts and harmonize the rules between Sharia courts and civil courts to ensure the enforcement of wives' rights, and to provide legal education to communities about the difference between *mahr* and harmful customary practices so that women's rights to *mahr* are truly protected, not just contractual rhetoric.

Legal Regulation of *Mahr* under Indonesia's Codified Islamic Family Law

The position of *mahr* in Indonesian legal architecture must be read in two layers, namely in the Marriage Law as a general norm and the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) as detailed rules for Muslim communities (Ridwan, 2020). Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage (Marriage Law) stipulates that marriage must be conducted according to the laws of each religion and recorded according to regulations, but the Marriage Law does not detail all the technical elements of *mahr*. For this reason, the KHI, published through Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 1991, serves as a material reference that outlines the definition, types, and mechanisms for enforcing *mahr* rights (Hadikusuma, 2022; Yuliatin & Ahmad, 2024).

The KHI explicitly defines *mahr* and sets out its normative principles. Articles 30 to 33 of the KHI emphasize that the prospective groom is obliged to pay *mahr* to the prospective bride, the amount, form, and type of which are determined based on the agreement of both parties and based on the principles of simplicity and convenience as recommended by Islamic teachings (Yuliatin & Ahmad, 2024). This provision emphasizes that *mahr* is not merely a symbol, but a contractual obligation that establishes *mahr* as a woman's right.

The KHI also regulates the form and mechanism of *mahr* delivery. For example, the KHI stipulates that *mahr* is given directly to the prospective bride and becomes her personal property upon delivery. The transfer is generally made in cash, but the KHI allows for deferral (*mu'akhkhar*) if agreed upon by the prospective wife, in which case the deferred *mahr* becomes a debt for the prospective husband (Ahadi & Djazimah, 2020; Yenti et al., 2020). In addition, the KHI regulates the consequences if the amount of *mahr* is not determined or if a dispute arises, there are provisions regarding *mahr mitsil* (equivalent wages) and referral of disputes to the Religious Court (Hilmy & Utami, 2021; Yanti et al., 2025).

The enforcement of *mahr* rights in the judicial sphere falls under the authority of the Religious Court. The Law on Religious Courts in Law No. 7 of 1989, as amended by Law No. 3 of 2006 and Law No. 50 of 2009, grants absolute competence to the Religious

Court to examine and decide cases in the field of marriage and inheritance based on Islamic law, including lawsuits related to *mahr* compensation, determination of the amount, and claims for fulfillment of the *mahr* (Afadi et al., 2025; Hadikusuma, 2022; Trigiyatno, 2021). Judicial practice shows that many decisions of the Religious Court and the Supreme Court reinforce the position of the *mahr* as the wife's right and the mechanism for its execution (Ridwan, 2020).

In socio-legal practice, a number of problems arise, namely the overlap between customary practices (such as *panaik* and *doi menre*) and *mahr*, causing confusion regarding evidence/allocation (Ash-Shabah et al., 2021; Asni et al., 2025; Avita et al., 2022). Cases of *mahr* in the form of land or high-value items that touch on agrarian law (e.g., land rights, buildings, registration) raise technical issues when the object of *mahr* must be transferred or its ownership proven, and often the weak recording of contracts and evidence of transfer makes *mahr* claims difficult to enforce (Afadi et al., 2025; Hadi et al., 2023; Maloko et al., 2024).

The normative and policy evaluations that are widely recommended in the literature are to strengthen the formalization of contracts, such as recording the details of the *mahr* in a marriage certificate or recognized document, harmonizing the rules between the KHI and civil and agrarian administrative provisions when the *mahr* is in the form of immovable assets, increasing access to Religious Court services and legal advocacy for women so that they can enforce *mahr* claims, as well as social campaigns to distinguish harmful customary practices from *fiqh* or KHI provisions that protect women's rights.

Convergence and Divergence in the Regulation of *Mahr*: A Nigeria–Indonesia Comparison

Normatively, there is a basic convergence in which both *mahr* recognition systems are based on Islamic *fiqh* tradition, but fundamental differences arise in the status of codification. In Nigeria, *mahr* is recognized primarily in the realm of Muslim personal law and sharia court decisions, which vary between states and interact intensively with customary law and positive state law (Idoko, 2024; Kannike & Ismail, 2023). Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the position of *mahr* is given relatively clear written legal reference through the KHI, which serves as a material guideline for the Religious Court, as well as the Marriage Law, which requires the registration of marriages (Ahadi & Djazimah, 2020; Ash-Shabah et al., 2021; Syahbib, 2025).

Significant institutional differences exist, with Nigeria having more heterogeneous institutions. In some states that implement sharia law, sharia judges/*qadis* adjudicate Muslim marriage cases, while in other regions Muslim family cases may be brought before customary courts or civil courts depending on the form of marriage (statutory vs. customary vs. Islamic), resulting in variations in access to and certainty of the law (Asagba et al., 2025; Idoko, 2024; Oyelade & Abuloye, 2023). In Indonesia, *mahr* claims and disputes fall under the jurisdiction of the Religious Court, which has absolute authority over Muslim marriage cases, providing a formal judicial channel for enforcement and execution (Ash-Shabah et al., 2021; Yenti et al., 2020; Yuliatin & Ahmad, 2024). This provides certainty in the legal process, although its implementation still faces practical challenges.

From a practical perspective, there is convergence of issues, namely that in both Nigeria and Indonesia, problems often arise with regard to evidence and documentation, such as verbal agreements or incomplete documents, confusion between *mahr* and customary practices such as bride price, and *mahr* in the form of immovable assets (land), which raises technical issues of transfer and registration. However, the implications are different. In Indonesia, these issues are usually resolved within the framework of the

Religious Court and civil administration (with harmonization efforts), and some regions apply customary systems, while in Nigeria, similar problems often reinforce dependence on informal resolutions and the role of local customary/religious leaders (Afadi et al., 2025; Idoko, 2024; Ikujuni & Kolade-Faseyi, 2021; Kannike & Ismail, 2023; Trigiyaatno, 2021).

In terms of women's protection, the KHI and the practice of Religious Courts in Indonesia provide a relatively clear normative basis for enforcing *mahr* rights, such as deferred *mahr* becoming the husband's debt and being enforceable in court (Asrory, 2020). Policy recommendations in Indonesia largely emphasize the formalization of contracts and legal education to narrow the gap between text and practice (Fakhyadi et al., 2025; Mursalin et al., 2023). In Nigeria, practical protection depends on location and the applicable legal system. In some jurisdictions, sharia provides similar protection, but in other places, overlapping customary laws, lack of record-keeping, and inconsistent application of sharia reduce women's ability to consistently claim their rights (Asagba et al., 2025; Ikujuni & Kolade-Faseyi, 2021).

Table 1. Brief Comparison of Mahr in Nigeria and Indonesia

Aspect	Nigeria	Indonesia
Legal status	Recognized in Muslim personal law and Sharia in many states; implementation varies and interacts with customary and statutory law.	Normatively regulated through the KHI as a material reference; the Marriage Law requires registration.
Forum for dispute resolution	<i>Qadi</i> /sharia courts in states that implement sharia, sometimes customary or civil courts depending on the type of marriage.	The Religious Courts have absolute jurisdiction over Muslim marriage matters, including <i>mahr</i> disputes.
Certainty of codification	Fragmented; largely based on personal law or sharia rulings and local practices.	More codified in the KHI, the Marriage Law, and the Religious Courts Law.
From or types of <i>mahr</i>	Recognized (<i>mu'ajjal</i> / <i>mu'akkhar</i>) according to <i>fiqh</i> practice; local variations such as interaction with bride-price.	Recognized and regulated in the form of goods, money, or services; deferment is permitted and becomes the husband's debt.
Evidence and registration	Often weak, relying on oral contracts and non-uniform documentation, making enforcement difficult in some regions.	There is a registration mechanism, but proof of <i>mahr</i> delivery is sometimes weak in practice.
Challenges	Legal fragmentation between sharia/customary/civil law, variation among states, and weak registration.	Differences between customary practices and the KHI, technical issues when <i>mahr</i> involves immovable assets, and access to enforcement for women.

As a normative summary, the comparison shows that although the principles of *fiqh* regarding mahr are similar, the actual protection afforded to women greatly depends on the level of codification, institutional uniformity, marriage registration, and interaction with customary/civil norms. Therefore, cross-country recommendations should include: (1) strengthening the recording of marriage contracts and mahr details; (2) clarifying the

status of mahr in agrarian or administrative law; (3) expanding judicial access for women; and (4) public education campaigns to distinguish mahr from harmful customary practices. These measures are relevant both to the Indonesian context and to regions in Nigeria that wish to improve legal certainty for women's rights.

***Mahr* and Women's Rights: Legal Protection and Gender Justice Perspectives**

From the perspective of human rights and gender justice, *mahr* should be viewed not merely as a ritual or tradition, but as part of a series of women's rights in marriage that include the right to ownership, the right to demand the husband's obligations, and the right to economic security after divorce or the death of the husband (Inayatillah et al., 2022; Yenti et al., 2020). Women who are unable to document the marriage contract, women who are socially pressured to forgive mahr claims, or customary practices that undermine the function of *mahr* (e.g., mixing it with the giving of money in customary traditions) weaken the effectiveness of legal protection (Asni et al., 2025; Maloko et al., 2024; Sahril, 2024). This situation shows that formal protection does not automatically result in substantive justice without intervention to improve access to registration, legal aid, and gender-sensitive dispute resolution mechanisms.

From a policy perspective, it is important to distinguish between two types of intervention: legal and administrative reforms to clarify the status of *mahr*, facilitate registration, and ensure the enforcement of decisions, such as simplifying *mahr* claim procedures in court, technical arrangements when *mahr* consists of immovable assets, and pro-access policies that empower women, such as legal aid services specifically for women, marriage law literacy programs, and safe mediation channels. The first intervention closes formal loopholes that allow for the denial of rights; the second intervention addresses the real obstacles women face when enforcing those rights. The two approaches are complementary and must be designed with sensitivity to the local context, where there are differences between regions dominated by religious, customary, or civil law.

A gender justice approach also demands that the discourse on *mahr* does not stop at the individual interests of wives, but looks at power relations within family and community structures. This means that advocating for *mahr* as a women's right needs to be combined with efforts to challenge patriarchal norms that devalue women's property rights, such as the stereotype that family assets belong to the husband, or social practices that force women to surrender their *mahr*. Norm-change programs, involving religious leaders, traditional leaders, and women's organizations, will increase the legitimacy of *mahr* enforcement and reduce social resistance to women's claims (Efrinaldi et al., 2022; Hilmy & Utami, 2021).

To ensure that *mahr* truly functions as an instrument of legal protection and gender justice, a monitoring and evaluation system is needed, standardized data collection on *mahr* disputes and court decisions, field research on barriers to rights enforcement, and community feedback mechanisms. At the practical level, this can be translated into operational recommendations such as including details of the *mahr* in easily accessible marriage registration documents, training judges/mediators on gender perspectives, legal aid and economic counseling services for women after divorce, and public campaigns to distinguish the *mahr* from harmful customary practices. It is this combination of legal reform, women's empowerment, and social norm change that is most likely to realize the promise of *mahr* as a women's right in the sense of substantive justice.

Conclusion

Mahr is essentially a woman's right recognized by *fiqh* tradition and has economic and symbolic protective potential in marriage. However, the realization of this right is highly dependent on the degree of legal codification, institutional uniformity, recording mechanisms, and interaction with customary practices. In Nigeria, the recognition of *mahr* is strong in *fiqh*, but enforcement practices are more fragmented due to variations between sharia, customary, and civil law, resulting in uncertainty of access for women. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, *mahr* has a relatively clearer normative umbrella through the KHI and the authority of the Religious Court, so there is a formal framework for enforcement, although implementation obstacles are still encountered. The main obstacles that arise are weak recording of contracts/delivery, confusion between *mahr* and bride-price practices, technical problems when *mahr* is in the form of immovable assets, and social barriers that limit women's ability to enforce their rights.

The policy and practical recommendation is to strengthen the formalization and documentation of *mahr*, for example by including details of the *mahr* in the marriage certificate or other easily accessible official documents, harmonizing the rules between personal and sharia law with civil and agrarian administrative provisions, especially when the *mahr* is in the form of land/assets, and increasing the capacity of judicial institutions and decision enforcement mechanisms so that *mahr* claims can be effectively recovered. At the level of access and protection, develop legal aid services specifically for women, marriage law literacy programs, and gender-sensitive mediation, conduct training for judges, *qadis*, and mediators on gender perspectives, and carry out public campaigns that clearly distinguish *mahr* from harmful customary practices..

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