



## The Abstention Phenomenon in the 2024 Mandailing Natal Regional Election in Qur'anic Perspective

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### Abstract

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*The phenomenon of non-voting (golput) or voter abstention in elections presents a significant challenge to democracy in Indonesia, including in the 2024 Mandailing Natal Regional Election. Low political participation can undermine the legitimacy of elected governments and hinder regional development processes. In the context of Islam, political participation can be viewed as part of the social responsibility taught in the Qur'an, which emphasizes the importance of deliberation, justice, and trustworthiness in societal life. This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach with data collected through in-depth interviews with non-participating voters in the 2024 Mandailing Natal Regional Election and secondary data analysis from reports by the General Election Commission (KPU) and relevant literature. The Qur'anic perspective is examined using the thematic interpretation (maudhu'i) method, tracing verses related to political participation. The study finds that the main factors driving non-voting in Mandailing Natal include: (1) public distrust in candidates perceived as incapable of bringing change, (2) political apathy due to money politics, and (3) limited understanding of the importance of political participation in Islam. From the Qur'anic perspective, abstention can be considered contrary to the principle of shura (deliberation), as stated in QS. Ash-Shura (42:38), and the obligation to uphold justice in QS. An-Nisa (4:58).*

**Keywords:** Non-Voting, Mandailing Natal Regional Election, Political Participation, Qur'anic Perspective, Shura, Justice.

Fenomena golongan putih (*golput*) atau ketidakhadiran pemilih dalam pemilihan umum menjadi tantangan serius dalam demokrasi di Indonesia, termasuk pada Pilkada Mandailing Natal 2024. Partisipasi politik yang rendah dapat menurunkan legitimasi pemerintahan terpilih dan menghambat proses pembangunan daerah. Dalam konteks Islam, partisipasi politik dapat dipandang sebagai bagian dari tanggung jawab sosial yang diajarkan dalam Al-Qur'an, yang menekankan pentingnya musyawarah, keadilan, dan amanah dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif dengan metode pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam dengan pemilih yang tidak berpartisipasi dalam Pilkada Mandailing Natal 2024, serta analisis data sekunder dari laporan Komisi Pemilihan Umum (KPU) dan literatur

terkait. Perspektif Al-Qur'an dikaji melalui metode tafsir tematik (*maudhu'i*), dengan menelusuri ayat-ayat yang relevan terkait partisipasi politik. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa faktor utama yang menyebabkan *golput* di Mandailing Natal meliputi: (1) ketidakpercayaan masyarakat terhadap kandidat yang dianggap tidak mampu membawa perubahan, (2) apatisme politik akibat praktik politik uang, serta (3) minimnya pemahaman tentang pentingnya partisipasi politik dalam Islam. Dari perspektif Al-Qur'an, *golput* dapat dianggap bertentangan dengan prinsip *syura* (musyawarah) sebagaimana disebutkan dalam QS. Asy-Syura (42:38) dan kewajiban menegakkan keadilan dalam QS. An-Nisa (4:58).

**Kata Kunci:** Golput, Pilkada Mandailing Natal, Partisipasi Politik, Perspektif Al-Qur'an, Syura, Keadilan.

## INTRODUCTION

Political participation is one of the main pillars of a modern democratic system. General elections, both at the national and local levels, are instruments that allow people to be directly involved in the political process through the election of leaders who will govern. Active public participation in elections not only reflects the legitimacy of the democratic system, but also determines the quality of the elected government. However, in recent years, the phenomenon of abstention (golput), or voter absenteeism in exercising their voting rights, has become an increasingly worrying issue in Indonesia, including in Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra.

In the 2024 Mandailing Natal regional election, the voter turnout rate decreased significantly compared to previous elections (Hidayat et al., 2022; HSB et al., 2021; Nurhikma Hayati et al., 2022; Suhendra et al., 2022). Based on data from the Mandailing Natal General Election Commission (KPU), the percentage of voters who did not exercise their voting rights increased dramatically (Pratiwi & Haerah, 2023; Putra & Fauzi, 2020; Saleh et al., 2023; Septianingrum & Rofieq, 2023). This phenomenon has drawn the attention of many parties, including academics, political practitioners, and community leaders, because low political participation can have a negative impact on the legitimacy of the elected government as well as on the overall regional development process.

The abstention phenomenon in Mandailing Natal is influenced by various factors, ranging from social, economic, to cultural aspects (Fadlurrohman, 2017; Simatupang, 2018; Ulum, 2011). One of the main causes is the community's low trust in the candidates competing in the elections. Many citizens feel that the candidates running do not have sufficient capacity or integrity to lead the region, so they feel there is no viable option to choose from. In addition, the practice of money politics, which is still rampant, is also one of the factors that reduce people's interest in participating (Winata, 2022).

In addition to social and political factors, cultural and religious aspects also play an important role in shaping the political behavior of Mandailing Natal people (Andriko & Sanur, 2018; Ansori, 2019; Sitti Suryani & Rasyidin, 2019). As an area known to have a religious society with strong Islamic traditions, political decisions are often influenced by religious views and local values (Amliansyah, 2021; Nasution et al., 2022). However, some people still have the misconception that politics is a worldly affair that has no direct link to religious obligations. As a result, they feel they have no moral or spiritual responsibility to participate in elections.

In Islam, participation in social and political life is actually part of collective responsibility (fardhu kifayah). The Qur'an and hadith provide clear guidance on the importance of electing just, trustworthy and responsible leaders. The concept of shura (deliberation) taught in Islam, as stated in QS. Asy-Syura (42:38), emphasizes that collective decisions in society must be made through a process of deliberation that involves the active participation of each individual (Muhammad Torieq Abdillah, 2024; Munshihah & Nurun Nisaa Baihaqi, 2023). Thus, exercising the right to vote in elections can be seen as one form of implementation of the shura principle in the context of modern democracy.

However, in reality, many people do not understand the importance of their role in choosing leaders who are in accordance with Islamic teachings. The abstention phenomenon that occurs in Mandailing Natal shows a gap between religious understanding and community political practice. Therefore, there needs to be an in-depth study that connects the abstention phenomenon with the

Qur'anic perspective, so that people can understand that political participation is not only a right, but also a social and moral obligation that must be carried out.

The abstention phenomenon also has serious implications for the quality of democracy and governance in Mandailing Natal. Governments elected with low levels of participation tend to have weak legitimacy in the eyes of the community. This can hamper the government's efforts in implementing development programs, due to minimal community support. In addition, low voter participation can also open up opportunities for candidates who are less competent or who rely on money politics to win elections. As a result, the quality of government produced will be low, which in turn will have a negative impact on community welfare.

In addition, political parties and regional head candidates also need to improve the quality of their campaigns to make them more educative and informative (Hidayat et al., 2022; Masitoh et al., 2013). Campaigns that only focus on populist promises without offering concrete solutions to the problems faced by the community tend to be ineffective in increasing voter participation. In contrast, campaigns that are transparent, honest and data-based can increase people's trust in the democratic process and encourage them to exercise their right to vote. Increasing people's political participation can also be done by improving the electoral system itself. The KPU and related institutions need to ensure that the electoral process is transparent, free from money politics, and easily accessible to all levels of society. In addition, local governments need to create a conducive political environment, where people feel safe and comfortable to participate in elections without intimidation or pressure from any party.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method to understand the phenomenon of abstention in the 2024 Mandailing Natal Pilkada and analyze it from a Qur'anic perspective (Nana Gustianda, 2021, 2022). This approach was chosen because it is able to explore in depth the factors that influence people's political behavior and how Islamic values can be a solution in increasing political participation. The location of this research is Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra, which experienced a significant decline in voter turnout in the 2024 Pilkada. The research subjects included voters who did not use their voting rights (golput), religious leaders who have the authority to provide religious views related to political obligations, and local election organizers such as members of the regional General Election Commission (KPU) to obtain quantitative and qualitative data related to the level of voter participation.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques. First, in-depth interviews with research subjects to explore the reasons behind their decision not to participate in the elections as well as their views on political participation from an Islamic perspective. Questions in the interviews covered aspects of personal motivation, perceptions of candidates, and the influence of religion in political decision-making. Second, participatory observation was used to observe the socio-political situation in Mandailing Natal, including the practice of money politics, the dynamics of candidate campaigns, and community responses to the electoral process. Third, documentation studies were conducted by collecting secondary data from KPU official reports, voter turnout statistics, and relevant literature such as books, scientific journals, and Qur'anic commentaries that discuss the concepts of shura (deliberation), amanah (responsibility), and justice in Islam (Muhammad Torieq Abdillah, 2024; Mukhtarom, 2018; Robikah, 2020).

The data obtained were analyzed using the thematic analysis method. The analysis process begins with data reduction, which is organizing and summarizing the raw data to identify the main themes related to the causes of abstention and its relevance to Islamic teachings. The data is then

categorized based on causal factors, whether social, economic, political or religious. After that, the data was interpreted with reference to Islamic concepts, such as shura as stated in QS. Ash-Syura (42:38), trust in QS. An-Nisa (4:58), and the prohibition of wasting responsibility in QS. Al-Anfal (8:27)(Gunawan, 2017). The results of this interpretation are used to summarize the research findings related to the golput phenomenon, its impact on government legitimacy, and recommendations for solutions based on Islamic values to increase political participation.

To ensure data validity, this research uses data triangulation by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted by asking the research subjects to verify the accuracy of the interview results and interpretations made by the researcher. An audit trail is also applied to record the entire process of data collection and analysis in detail, so that it can be scientifically accounted for. With this approach, the research is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the golput phenomenon in Mandailing Natal and contribute to increasing public political awareness based on Islamic teachings, so that political participation can be significantly increased in the future.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This research identifies some of the main factors that led to the high abstention rate in the 2024 Mandailing Natal regional election. These findings are categorized into three main factors: (1) public distrust of candidates, (2) political apathy due to the practice of money politics, and (3) lack of religious understanding of the obligation of political participation in Islam. Each of these factors is then analyzed from a Qur'anic perspective to provide a comprehensive picture of the implications and solutions.

### **Public Distrust of Candidates**

One of the main findings of the research is the low level of public trust in the candidates competing in the 2024 Mandailing Natal regional elections. Most respondents stated that they felt that none of the candidates were truly capable of bringing significant change or had a good track record in leading. Some respondents mentioned that the candidates who are running are considered to only pursue power and do not have clear programs to improve the welfare of the community. This condition creates skepticism among voters, who ultimately choose not to exercise their right to vote.

From a Qur'anic perspective, choosing a fair and responsible leader is a collective obligation (*fardhu kifayah*) for Muslims. QS. An-Nisa (4:58) affirms, “Verily, Allah enjoins you to deliver the trust to those who are entitled to it, and when you set a law among men, set it justly.” This verse emphasizes the importance of choosing leaders who are able to carry out the mandate fairly. Therefore, distrust of candidates can be overcome by encouraging political parties to be more selective in endorsing candidates, as well as ensuring that candidates have integrity, capacity and a good track record.

In the perspective of Qur'anic interpretation, public distrust of candidates in general elections, including in the context of the 2024 Mandailing Natal elections, can be seen as a manifestation of failure to fulfill the mandate of leadership, which is a fundamental principle in Islam. The concept of leadership in Islam is closely related to trust, justice, and social responsibility, all of which are emphasized in various verses of the Qur'an. One of the verses that is the main foundation in the discussion of leadership is QS. An-Nisa (4:58), “Verily, Allah enjoins you to deliver the trust to those who are entitled to it, and when you set a law among men, set it justly.” This verse shows



that the mandate of leadership is not just a political position, but a great responsibility that must be carried out with justice and integrity.

According to classical mufasirs such as Al-Qurthubi, this verse applies not only to formal leaders such as heads of state or government officials, but also to anyone who is given the responsibility to take care of the interests of others. This mandate must be handed over to someone who is worthy and capable of carrying it out properly, because the inability to fulfill the mandate will bring damage to society. Al-Qurthubi emphasized that incompetence or dishonesty in carrying out the mandate of leadership is a form of betrayal prohibited by Islam. In the context of Pilkada, people's distrust of candidates can be considered as a reaction to the candidates' failure to demonstrate their capacity to fulfill this mandate properly.

In addition, the concept of justice mentioned in the verse is also an important criterion in choosing a leader. Justice in Ibn Katsir's interpretation is defined as putting something in its right place and giving rights to those who are entitled. A just leader is a leader who is able to make wise, impartial, and welfare-oriented decisions for the community. Public distrust of candidates is often caused by the assumption that prospective leaders do not have the ability to be fair, or even tend to act unjustly by prioritizing personal interests or certain groups. In this interpretation, an unjust leader will damage the social order and bring society to a state of instability.

Furthermore, QS. Al-Baqarah (2:247) which talks about the appointment of Saul as king by Allah also provides an important lesson about the criteria for leaders in Islam. The verse reads, "Verily Allah has chosen him (Saul) as your king and endowed him with vast knowledge and a mighty body." In Ibn Katsir's tafsir, it is explained that the two main criteria for leaders mentioned in this verse are knowledge and physical strength, which in modern times can be interpreted as intellectual ability and the capacity to lead decisively. Public distrust of candidates often arises when the prospective leader does not demonstrate sufficient intellectual capacity or leadership ability. In this context, the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of choosing leaders who have sufficient competence and capacity to manage the affairs of society well.

The concept of shura (deliberation) is also relevant in discussing people's distrust of candidates. QS. Ash-Shura (42:38) mentions that the characteristics of believers are those who always deliberate in their affairs, "And (for) those who accept (obey) the call of their Lord and establish prayer, while their affairs (are) decided by deliberation between them." Deliberation is a fundamental principle in Islam that emphasizes the importance of collective participation in decision-making. In Al-Mawardi's interpretation, deliberation is understood as a mechanism to reach a fair and wise consensus in the affairs of society. The community's distrust of candidates may reflect the failure of prospective leaders to effectively engage the community in this deliberative process. If candidates are perceived as not listening to the aspirations of the community or not involving them in the preparation of work programs, then it is natural for the community to feel skeptical about their ability to lead fairly.

The community's distrust of candidates can also be linked to the Qur'anic prohibition against unjust and corrupt behavior in leadership. QS. Al-Baqarah (2:188) asserts, "And do not eat your neighbor's wealth by false means, and do not bring your affairs before a judge, that you may eat of the wealth of others by way of sin, while you know." This verse reminds us that one of the major sins in Islam is abusing power to take away other people's rights or committing corruption. Tafsir At-Thabari emphasizes that this verse contains a strong warning for leaders not to use their positions to enrich themselves in an unjust manner. People's distrust of candidates is often based

on allegations or experiences that the prospective leader is involved in corrupt practices or has a tendency to abuse power if elected. In this case, people need leaders who are clean and have a strong commitment to justice and transparency.

The Qur'anic interpretation perspective emphasizes that leadership is a great mandate that must be carried out with justice, integrity and adequate abilities. Public distrust of candidates is a reflection of the failure of prospective leaders to demonstrate these criteria. Therefore, Muslim communities are encouraged to be more critical and selective in choosing leaders, taking into account the values taught in the Qur'an. The leaders chosen should be individuals who are able to fulfill the mandate fairly, have sufficient intellectual capacity, and are willing to involve the community in the decision-making process through transparent and inclusive deliberations. Thus, political participation in Islam is not only a social obligation, but also an act of worship that brings blessings to society if it is carried out in accordance with the guidance of the Sharia.

### **Political Apathy due to the Practice of Money Politics**

The second significant factor is the rampant practice of money politics. The research found that this practice is still a common phenomenon in the Mandailing Natal Pilkada. Most respondents recognized the efforts of the candidates' success teams to give money or goods to voters with the aim of influencing their choices. Although some people accepted the offer, they remained skeptical of the democratic process and considered the election to be nothing more than a political transaction. As a result, many of them choose not to exercise their right to vote because they feel that their vote will not make a difference.

The practice of money politics is contrary to the principles of justice in Islam. QS. Al-Baqarah (2:188) states, "And do not eat of your neighbor's wealth by unlawful means and do not bring your affairs before a judge, that you may eat of the wealth of others by way of sin, while you know." This verse teaches that all forms of transactions that undermine justice, including money politics, are prohibited in Islam. To address this issue, there needs to be a serious effort from election organizers, religious leaders and civil society to educate the public about the dangers of money politics and increase monitoring of the practice. In the context of money politics, giving bribes to voters to influence their choices is a violation of justice. People's votes, which should reflect their aspirations and trust in the candidates, are turned into traded commodities.

In addition, the practice of money politics can also be categorized as *risywah* or bribery, which has been forbidden in Islam. The Prophet said, "Allah curses the giver of bribes and the receiver of bribes in court" (HR. Tirmidzi). Although this hadith refers to the context of the court, scholars agree that the prohibition of bribery applies in various aspects of life, including politics. The interpretation of this hadith shows that *riywah* undermines the principles of justice and encourages social inequality. In the context of elections, money politics not only creates injustice in the electoral process, but also weakens the integrity of prospective leaders and undermines public trust in the democratic system itself.

The political apathy that arises from money politics also has a deep spiritual dimension. In Islam, participation in elections is part of social responsibility and worship to Allah SWT. Choosing a fair leader is a mandate that will be accounted for in the afterlife. However, when people lose trust in the political process due to rampant money politics, they tend to be reluctant to exercise their right to vote. This is contrary to QS. An-Nisa' (4:58), "Verily, Allah enjoins you to deliver the trust to those who are entitled to it, and (enjoins you) when you set a law among men to set it justly." The interpretation of this verse emphasizes that choosing a trustworthy leader is a moral and social

responsibility that must be carried out with full awareness. If this responsibility is ignored, then the losses faced are not only worldly, but also ukhrawi.

Money politics also violates the principle of truth, which is emphasized in QS. Al-Baqarah (2:42), “And do not confuse the right with the false and do not conceal the right while you know.” This verse warns against confusing the truth with falsehood. Money politics is a form of falsehood that pollutes the democratic process, which should be a means to uphold truth and justice in choosing leaders. When this falsehood continues, people will become increasingly alienated from the political process, creating a vicious cycle that is difficult to break.

To overcome this problem, strategic steps based on Qur'anic values are needed. Educating the public about the dangers of money politics and the importance of justice is the first step that must be taken. QS. Al-Baqarah (2:286) reminds us that every individual is responsible for their actions: “Allah does not burden anyone except according to his ability. He will be rewarded for the good he has done and punished for the evil he has done.” With this understanding, people are expected to have the awareness to reject all forms of money politics and participate in elections based on the values of honesty and justice.

In addition, the role of religious leaders is very important in sensitizing the public. QS. Ali 'Imran (3:104) asserts, “And let there be among you a group of people who call to virtue, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil; they are the fortunate ones.” Clerics can use the pulpit to deliver moral messages about the dangers of money politics, the importance of honesty and responsibility in choosing leaders. Continuous da'wah will help instill these values in people's lives.

Increased monitoring of money politics is also an important step. The Qur'an encourages justice and transparency in all aspects of life, including in the electoral process. QS. Al-Ma'idah (5:8) states, “O you who have believed, be ye men of justice, witnesses for the sake of Allah, even if it be against yourselves or your fathers and your kindred.” This verse provides a moral foundation to uphold justice consistently, even if it goes against personal interests. In this context, strengthening electoral watchdog institutions, strict law enforcement, and empowering civil society to report violations are concrete steps that need to be taken.

Finally, building collective awareness about the importance of clean elections is key to restoring public trust in the political process. QS. Ar-Ra'd (13:11) reminds us, “Verily, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change themselves.” This verse emphasizes that change will only occur if people actively seek to improve their situation. In the context of elections, this means active community participation in electing fair and trustworthy leaders, and rejecting all forms of money politics.

The practice of money politics is a serious threat to the values of justice, trustworthiness and social responsibility taught in Islam. From the perspective of Qur'anic interpretation, this phenomenon is a form of injustice that destroys social order and weakens public trust in the democratic process. To overcome the adverse effects of money politics, strategic steps are needed that involve community education, the role of religious leaders, increased supervision, and the formation of collective awareness about the importance of clean elections. With these efforts, it is hoped that public trust in the political process can be restored, so that elections can again become a means to uphold justice and shared prosperity.

### **Lack of Religious Understanding of the Obligation of Political Participation**



This research also found that one of the causes of abstention is the lack of public understanding of the importance of political participation as part of religious obligations. Most respondents who do not exercise their right to vote consider that politics is a worldly affair that has no direct link to Islamic teachings. They feel that not voting in elections will have no negative moral or spiritual impact.

This view is contrary to the teachings of the Qur'an, which emphasizes the importance of deliberation (shura) in making decisions that concern the interests of the people. QS. Ash-Shura (42:38) states, "And (for) those who accept (obey) the call of their Lord and establish prayer, and their affairs (are) decided by deliberation between them; and they spend some of the sustenance We give them." This verse confirms that deliberation is an important principle in social life, and in the context of modern democracies, elections can be considered as a form of collective deliberation. Therefore, political participation is a responsibility that should not be neglected.

To increase community political participation, it is necessary to conduct political education based on Islamic values. Religious leaders have a strategic role in providing understanding to the community that exercising the right to vote is part of the social and moral responsibilities taught in Islam. In addition, local governments and election organisers also need to work together with religious institutions to organise educational programmes that can increase people's political awareness.

In Qur'anic interpretation, the principle of deliberation (shura) is a fundamental element in social life, as affirmed in QS. Ash-Shura (42:38), 'And (for) those who accept (obey) the call of their Lord and establish prayer, and their affairs (are) decided by deliberation between them; and they spend some of the sustenance We give them.' This verse places deliberation as one of the main characteristics of the group of believers who obey Allah SWT. In the tafsir, deliberation is understood as a joint decision-making process that reflects justice, togetherness, and collective responsibility. This concept is not only relevant in the context of governance and politics, but also guides various aspects of social life, including problem solving and the management of public affairs.

Qur'anic exegesis teaches that deliberation is a form of implementation of the principle of egalitarianism in Islam, where every individual has the right and responsibility to contribute to decisions that concern the common good. In modern democracies, elections can be considered as one of the tangible manifestations of collective deliberation, as through elections, people voice their aspirations and contribute to determining the leaders who will guide the direction of public policy. Therefore, political participation, including exercising the right to vote in elections, is a form of implementation of this principle of deliberation. In this context, abandoning political responsibility is tantamount to ignoring one of the important principles taught by the Qur'an.

Furthermore, the interpretation of QS. Ash-Shura (42:38) shows that deliberation cannot be separated from the spiritual dimension. The verse links the exercise of deliberation with obedience to Allah, the performance of prayer, and the use of sustenance for the common good. This indicates that decisions taken through deliberation must be based on the values of justice, honesty, and favouring the truth. Therefore, deliberative processes, including elections, should not be tainted by practices that contradict these values, such as money politics or vote manipulation. Violation of these principles not only undermines the democratic process, but is also a form of violation of the mandate given to humans by Allah SWT.

In addition, the interpretation of QS. Ash-Syura (42:38) also provides a reminder that deliberation is a form of collective responsibility, where every member of society has a role in ensuring that decisions taken reflect the common good. In the context of elections, this means that each individual has a responsibility to exercise his or her right to vote wisely, based on a fair and objective assessment of the contending candidates. Indifference to this process not only has a negative impact on society as a whole, but is also a form of neglect of a social mandate that must be accounted for before Allah SWT.

Thus, the interpretation of QS. Ash-Syura (42:38) asserts that political participation is a tangible manifestation of the principle of deliberation taught by the Qur'an. This process must be carried out with full awareness and responsibility, so that decisions taken through deliberation truly reflect the values of justice, truth, and alignment to the benefit of the people.

## CONCLUSION

The abstention phenomenon in the 2024 Mandailing Natal Regional Election is strongly driven by the community's distrust of the quality of candidates running in the election. The community feels that most candidates do not have a good track record, cannot be relied upon in carrying out the mandate, and are unable to offer concrete programmes to improve welfare. This creates a sceptical attitude among voters who eventually choose not to exercise their right to vote as a form of protest against a political system that is considered unresponsive to the needs of the community.

In the perspective of Qur'anic interpretation, this distrust is closely related to the principles of trustworthiness, justice and transparency which are the main basis for choosing leaders. Islam teaches that a leader must be someone who has the capacity, integrity and ability to uphold justice in leading. QS. An-Nisa (4:58) and QS. Al-Baqarah (2:247) emphasise the importance of choosing leaders who have the knowledge, strength and ability to lead fairly, while QS. Al-Baqarah (2:188) reminds leaders not to abuse power for personal gain. People's distrust of candidates who do not fulfil these criteria can be taken as an indication that people crave leaders who are trustworthy, transparent and can be trusted to carry out their duties for the common good.

Therefore, to overcome the phenomenon of abstention and build public trust in the democratic process, there needs to be an effort to improve the quality of candidates running in the elections, both in terms of track record, leadership capacity, and commitment to the welfare of the people. Political parties, as the parties that endorse candidates, must be more selective in choosing candidates who fulfil criteria that are in accordance with Islamic values, as well as having the integrity and competence needed. In addition, a deeper understanding of the importance of political participation in Islam also needs to be socialised so that people understand that choosing leaders is part of a moral and social responsibility that should not be ignored.

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