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Beyond forced displacement: A Qur'anic reconstruction of *ikhrāj min al-diyār* in dialogue with critical refugee studies

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ABSTRACT

Forced expulsion involves not only the loss of a dwelling place but also an act that produces injustice and raises the question of how that injustice can be answered. This article reconstructs the Qur'anic concept of *ikhrāj min al-diyār* (إخراج من الديار) and examines its implications for Critical Refugee Studies (CRS). Using a qualitative library research design, the study analyses Qur'anic verses, classical exegesis (*tafsīr*), historical context, and contemporary literature on forced displacement, with Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:38–41 as the principal corpus. The study finds that *ikhrāj min al-diyār* constructs expulsion through the relationship between dwelling, right, and injustice. Within this reconstruction, the concept of *daf*ʿ (دفع) emerges as a key dimension that links the recognition of unjust expulsion with action to restrain or prevent harm. This dimension is further read together with *nuṣrah* (support) and *tamkīn* (empowerment or enabling position), allowing an analysis of support for affected people and the restoration of their capacity to live. A reading through early Islamic history and the Palestinian context demonstrates the conceptual relevance of this relationship for examining diverse responses to expulsion, including community agency as well as humanitarian, legal, and political action. The article offers a Qur'anic reconstruction that connects unjust expulsion with action to restrain harm and to restore the capacity to live. It contributes to the dialogue with CRS by widening the conceptual resources for understanding forced displacement, not only through the experience of displacement and the protection of those affected, but also through attention to the actions and relations that determine whether injustice can be limited and life restored.

KEYWORDS: Critical Refugee Studies; dafʿ; forced displacement; ikhrāj min al-diyār; protection; Qur'an

1. INTRODUCTION

The human experience of losing one's home cannot be understood merely as movement from one territory to another. Displacement may involve the loss of dwelling, security, property, social ties, and a sense of belonging, as well as the ability to determine one's life after that place has been lost. The development of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (RFMS) shows that scholarly attention to these problems has expanded beyond the legal category of the *refugee* towards various forms of forced migration and wider experiences of displacement. It also shows that displaced people do not constitute a homogeneous group; rather, they hold diverse experiences, social positions, and forms of agency (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2014) [11].

The Qur'an repeatedly depicts the expulsion of people from their dwellings, among others in Q. al-Baqarah [2]:84–85, Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:39–40, Q. al-Ḥashr [59]:2, and Q. al-Ḥashr [59]:8. In Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40, for instance, those who suffered expulsion are described with the expression أُخْرِجُوا مِن دِيَارِهِم بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ (*ukhrijū min diyārihim bi-ghayri ḥaqq*), that is, those who were driven out of their *diyār* without just cause. The verse does not merely describe movement; it places the act of driving people out of their *diyār* in relation to injustice and simultaneously connects it with *daf*ʿ, namely God's repelling of some people by means of others. Ibn Kathīr associates the verse with the experience of the Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions who were driven out of Makkah, while al-Qurṭubī explicitly explains that the expulsion mentioned in the verse is a form of persecution (Al-Qurṭubī, 2006 [4]; Ibn Kathīr, 1999 [15]).

For this reason, *ikhrāj min al-diyār* should not, from the outset, be simply equated with *forced displacement* in contemporary terminology. Such an equation risks overlooking the specificity of the Qur'anic category. What is needed first is a reconstruction of how the Qur'an constructs *ikhrāj*: who carries out the expulsion, who is its object, what renders it *bi-ghayri ḥaqq*, how *diyār* is positioned within that construction, how expulsion relates to the loss of *amwāl* (property), and how *hijrah*, *daf*ʿ, support, and the use of power appear within a wider network

of meaning. This study therefore does not proceed from the assumption that *ikhrāj min al-diyār* is the Qur'anic term for "refugee" or "forced displacement"; instead, it seeks first to understand the concept from within the Qur'anic tradition and its exegesis.

The gap this study seeks to fill is therefore not merely a shortage of studies on Islam and refugees, but the limited dialogue between the Qur'anic tradition and critical developments in the study of forced displacement, together with the limited plurality of conceptual sources in the production of knowledge about displacement. If CRS has opened space for the pluralisation of knowledge through engagement with Indigenous knowledge and place-based epistemologies, the Islamic intellectual tradition can likewise be brought in as a conceptual source to broaden the academic conversation on forced displacement (Arat-Koç, 2020, pp. 373–379) [5]. This study is not intended to replace the categories developed in Refugee Studies, still less to set "Islam" against "the West", but to expand the conceptual resources available for understanding forced displacement through a dialogue between the Qur'anic tradition and CRS.

The novelty of this study lies in two aspects. First, it shifts attention from studies that mainly focus on people who have been displaced towards an analysis of the act that produces displacement, namely *ikhrāj min al-diyār*. This shift allows expulsion to be read as an act involving relations between place, power, injustice, loss, and responses to displacement. Second, the study offers a two-way epistemic dialogue between the Qur'anic tradition and CRS. It does not simply "apply" CRS concepts to the Qur'an; rather, it first reconstructs the Qur'anic categories and then identifies points of convergence, difference, and possible contribution to debates on forced displacement. This position places the study within the effort to broaden epistemic plurality in displacement studies by presenting the Islamic intellectual tradition as one conceptual source beyond the dominance of Western traditions.

Accordingly, this study aims to reconstruct the concept of *ikhrāj min al-diyār* in the Qur'an by attending to its network of meaning and its interpretation in the exegetical tradition, and to analyse its possible conceptual contribution to CRS through a dialogue on forced displacement, dispossession, place, agency, protection, and knowledge production. With this aim, the study is expected not only to provide a deeper reading of the concept of expulsion in the Qur'an, but also to show that the study of forced displacement can be enriched through more serious engagement with other intellectual traditions, without erasing the complexity or the contributions of knowledge developed within Refugee Studies and CRS.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Refugee and Forced Migration Studies and the problem of categories

As an academic field, Refugee Studies has undergone significant institutional growth, particularly through the establishment of research centres, academic journals, and close links with policy and humanitarian institutions. Black (2001) [8] shows that this growth produced a strong connection between refugee research and policy, although that connection has not always yielded comparable policy influence (pp. 57–64). Alongside this development, the field has faced questions concerning definitions, the boundaries of the *refugee* category, and the relationship between refugees and other migrant groups. Consequently, the study of forced migration is concerned not only with how displaced people obtain protection, but also with how categories and knowledge about displacement are formed (Black, 2001, pp. 63–64) [8].

These questions become even more pressing when the development of Refugee Studies is viewed through the relationship between the Global North and the Global South. Drawing on the critique of Bhupinder Chimni, Arat-Koç (2020) [5] shows that Refugee Studies and Forced Migration Studies display a Euro/North-centric tendency in their institutional structure and orientation. There is a paradox: most of the world's refugees are located in or hosted by countries of the Global South, while the main research centres, leading journals, and most of the theoretical production of the field are concentrated in the Global North (pp. 372–373). The issue, therefore, is not only where displacement takes place or who experiences it, but also who holds the authority to produce knowledge, define categories, and shape how displacement is understood. This critique does not imply that all knowledge produced in the Global North should be set aside; rather, it points to the need to open wider space for experiences and intellectual traditions that have been under-represented in the production of knowledge on forced migration.

Critical Refugee Studies and epistemic pluralisation

The question of knowledge production has become a central concern in the development of CRS. Arat-Koç (2020) [5] argues that decolonising Refugee Studies involves not only a critique of migration and protection policies, but also a critique of the way refugees are constructed in dominant discourse. One problem she highlights is the *charity framework*, namely the tendency to view refugee protection through a relationship between those who give

protection and those who receive it, while the political and historical conditions that contribute to producing displacement receive less attention. CRS thus treats the study of refugees as a space for interrogating the social, political, and historical processes that produce displacement, rather than merely as a field that seeks solutions for those who have already become refugees (pp. 378–379).

This development simultaneously opens the possibility of pluralising sources of knowledge in refugee studies. Arat-Koç (2020) [5] shows that engagement with Indigenous knowledge can enrich Refugee Studies, especially by shifting attention from questions of protection or exclusion alone towards questions of displacement and the injustices that produce refugees. She also stresses the importance of a *place-based episteme*, that is, the possibility of building an understanding of justice and political life by attending to the relationship between human beings and place (pp. 373–374). The critique of Global North dominance thus does not stop at geographical representation; it develops into a more fundamental epistemological question: must forced displacement continue to be understood primarily through categories formed within dominant intellectual traditions, or can other knowledge traditions also provide conceptual resources for broadening our understanding of displacement?

Islamic perspectives on forced migration

This question opens space for the Islamic intellectual tradition to contribute to dialogue with CRS. An Islamic perspective in forced migration studies is not entirely new. A number of studies have discussed forced migration, asylum, protection, and the rights of forced migrants from an Islamic perspective. Azmi (2022) [7], for example, shows that Islamic sources pay attention to people who experience oppression and those driven out of their homes, and connects the early migration experience of Muslims with the concept of *hijrah*. In his discussion, *hijrah* is even presented as having a certain affinity with the notion of *territorial asylum* in contemporary legal terminology (pp. 111–112). However, such studies tend to proceed from questions of rights, protection, asylum, and *hijrah* as a response to oppression, while the Qur'anic construction of the act of expulsion itself still requires a more specific reconstruction.

In the literature reviewed, at least three tendencies can be identified. First, RFMS has developed discussions of displacement, refugeehood, dispossession, agency, and protection, while also facing problems of definition and categorical boundaries; Black (2001) [8] shows that conceptual questions about the scope of the field and the refugee category remain an important part of its development (pp. 63–64). Second, CRS has widened attention from the refugee category and protection mechanisms towards the production of refugees, power relations, dispossession, place, and the critique of the epistemic dominance of the Global North; Arat-Koç (2020) [5] even points to the possibility of enriching the field through Indigenous knowledge and a *politics of place* (pp. 373–379). Third, Islamic studies on forced migration and asylum have demonstrated the existence of Qur'anic and Islamic sources concerning *hijrah*, protection, rights, and experiences of expulsion, but attention to *ikhrāj min al-diyār* as a distinct object of conceptual reconstruction remains limited in the body of literature reviewed (Azmi, 2022, pp. 111–112) [7].

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Research design

This study adopts a qualitative method in the form of library research. This method was chosen because the object of the study consists of concepts and constructions of meaning found in textual sources, rather than field data obtained through observation or interviews. In qualitative research, documents can be treated as data sources to be analysed systematically in order to obtain meaning and understanding of the phenomenon under study (Bowen, 2009, pp. 27–40) [9]. Library research in this study is not understood merely as collecting and summarising literature, but as a systematic process of identifying, selecting, critically reading, grouping, and synthesising sources relevant to the research questions (Snyder, 2019, pp. 333–339) [25].

Data sources

The data sources comprise primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are the Qur'an, particularly verses containing derivatives of *ikhrāj* and the construction *ikhrāj min al-diyār*, together with other verses conceptually related to expulsion, dwelling, movement, loss of property, protection, and responses to displacement. The main verses examined are Q. al-Baqarah [2]:84–85, Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:39–40, Q. al-Ḥashr [59]:2, and Q. al-Ḥashr [59]:8. English renderings of Qur'anic verses are adapted from Abdel Haleem (2010) [13]. Works of exegesis are used as principal sources for reconstructing how the interpretive tradition understands these verses, especially *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm* by Ibn Kathīr, *al-Jāmiʿ li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Qurṭubī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān* by al-Ṭabarī, and *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr* by Ibn ʿĀshūr, supported by the lexicons of al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī and Lane. Secondary sources include books, journal articles, and academic studies on Refugee Studies, Forced Migration Studies, CRS,

decolonisation of knowledge, the Global North–South divide, Indigenous knowledge, forced displacement, dispossession, and Islamic studies on migration, asylum, and *hijrah*.

Data collection

Data were collected through a staged literature search based on two main needs of the study. First, the search identified and gathered verses and exegetical sources relevant to the concept of *ikhrāj min al-diyār*. Second, the search covered contemporary literature needed to build a dialogue with CRS. Keywords related to the object of study were used, including *ikhrāj min al-diyār*, *ukhrijū min diyārihim*, Qur'anic expulsion, forced displacement, refugee, dispossession, place, agency, protection, Islamic migration, and Islamic asylum. The literature obtained was then selected on the basis of its relevance to the research questions and its contribution to the conceptual context of the study. The search and selection were conducted iteratively, so that new sources found in the bibliographies of key works could be used to broaden and deepen the research corpus.

Data analysis

The analysis was carried out in two interrelated stages. The first stage was a thematic-conceptual analysis of the Qur'an. At this stage, the study did not immediately equate *ikhrāj min al-diyār* with *forced displacement*, but first reconstructed the concept from within the Qur'anic network of meaning. The analysis began by identifying word forms derived from the root *kh-r-j* that relate to the act of driving out or being driven out, and then mapped the relationship of these words with *diyār* and with concepts appearing in the same verse contexts. Attention was then directed to key concepts such as *bi-ghayri ḥaqq*, *ẓulm*, *amwāl*, *hijrah*, *dafʿ*, *nuṣrah*, and the use of power. In this way, *ikhrāj* was treated not as a stand-alone term but as part of a wider conceptual network.

This was followed by a reading of the exegetical works to see how the concept is understood in the Islamic interpretive tradition. The commentaries were used to identify historical context, linguistic explanation, intertextual relations, and the meanings given to expulsion in the verses studied. In interpreting Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:39–40, for example, Ibn Kathīr links expulsion with the experience of the Prophet and his Companions who were driven out of Makkah, while al-Qurṭubī explains expulsion as a form of persecution (Al-Qurṭubī, 2006 [4]; Ibn Kathīr, 1999 [15]). The reading of *tafsīr* was not intended to find a single final meaning, but to observe how the concept of *ikhrāj* is formed, explained, and connected with other concepts in the exegetical tradition.

The second stage was a conceptual dialogue with CRS. Here, the results of the Qur'anic analysis were compared dialogically with several central issues in the CRS literature, notably forced displacement, dispossession, place, agency, protection, power, and the production of knowledge about displacement. The comparison did not position CRS as a theory that determines the meaning of the verses *a priori*; rather, it brought together two conceptual sources that had first been analysed independently. The synthesis was directed towards answering what the Qur'anic concept can offer to the understanding of forced displacement, without claiming that *ikhrāj min al-diyār* is a direct equivalent of the *refugee* or *forced displacement* category in contemporary scholarship. The results are thus expected to show the possible contribution of the Qur'anic intellectual tradition as one non-Western source of knowledge for broadening the discussion of displacement, while preserving the specificity of terminology and meaning that derive from the Qur'an.

Research Questions

To address the purpose of the study, two research questions are investigated:

1. How does the Qur'an construct the concept of *ikhrāj min al-diyār*, particularly through the relationship between *ikhrāj*, *diyār*, *bi-ghayri ḥaqq*, *ẓulm*, *amwāl*, and *dafʿ*?
2. How can this Qur'anic construction be brought into dialogue with CRS, particularly in discussions of forced displacement, dispossession, place, agency, protection, and the production of knowledge about displacement?

With this formulation, the inquiry moves from an internal reconstruction of the Qur'an towards a dialogue with a contemporary field of study, so that CRS is not positioned as a framework that determines the meaning of the verses *a priori*.

4. RESULTS

***Ikhrāj min al-Diyār*: Reconstructing the Qur'anic concept of expulsion**

In this study, the term *ikhrāj min al-diyār* is used as an analytical label rather than as a technical term that appears literally in the Qur'an as a fixed nominal phrase. The Qur'an employs various derivatives of the root خ ر ج (*kh-r-j*) to describe the act of going out, bringing out, or causing someone to go out. The root occurs 182 times in the Qur'an, with the form *akhraja* (Form IV) among the most frequent, while the verbal noun *ikhrāj* also appears several times. A reconstruction of *ikhrāj* therefore cannot rely on a single verse but must attend to the network of

usages of *kharaja*, *akhraja*, *ukhrija*, and *ikhrāj* in the context of people being moved from their dwellings (The Quranic Arabic Corpus, n.d.) [26].

The main corpus in this study is Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:39–40, accompanied by supporting verses relevant to the theme, such as Q. al-Baqarah [2]:84–85 and Q. al-Ḥashr [59]:2 and 8, as well as other verses that help distinguish between the act of leaving and the act of expelling. This distinction matters because the Qur'an does not treat all human movement as the same phenomenon. Q. al-Baqarah [2]:243, for example, uses the active form *kharajū min diyārihim*, "they went out of their homes", whereas Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40 uses the passive form *ukhrijū min diyārihim*, "they were driven out of their homes". Even at the morphological level, then, the Qur'an distinguishes between moving out and being moved out by an agent acting upon others (The Quranic Arabic Corpus, n.d.) [26].

Lexically, the root *kh-r-j* basically denotes going out or emerging from a place, state, or position. Al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī explains *kharaja* as *burūz min maqarrihi aw ḥālihi*, that is, going out from one's place or condition, while the form *ikhrāj* (*akhraja*) is used for causing something or someone to go out. He gives Qur'anic examples such as *akhrijū āla Lūṭin min qaryatikum* in Q. al-Naml [27]:56 and *akhrajaka rabbuka min baytika* in Q. al-Anfāl [8]:5 (Al-Aṣfahānī, n.d.) [2]. Lane likewise distinguishes *kharaja*, "he went out", from *akhraja*, "he made or caused to go out", including the meanings "expel", "eject", or "dislodge" (Lane, 1865) [17].

The construction becomes clearer in Q. al-Baqarah [2]:84–85. The Qur'an first prohibits *tukhrijūna anfusakum min diyārikum* and then mentions *tukhrijūna farīqan minkum min diyārihim*, "you drive a party of your own people out of their homes". Here, *ikhrāj* is placed alongside the prohibition of killing and the violation of a covenant, so that expulsion is not merely geographical movement but an act with moral and social dimensions. Al-Ṭabarī understands this expulsion as an act committed with sin and aggression (*al-ithm wa al-ʿudwān*), so that driving people from their *diyār* becomes part of the violation condemned by the verse (Aṭ-Ṭabarī, 2001) [6]. The first element of the construction of *ikhrāj*, therefore, is the presence of an agent who causes others to leave and of those who are its object.

The object of *ikhrāj* in these verses is دِيَار (*diyār*), the plural of *dār*. Lexically, *dār* refers to a house or dwelling, including a residence consisting of buildings and the space around them; Lane explains *dār* as "a place of abode", with *diyār* among its plural forms (Lane, 1865) [17]. *Diyār* therefore need not be translated directly as "homeland". Such a translation may be too broad if used without regard to context. In Q. al-Baqarah [2]:84–85 and Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40, the closest meaning is the dwelling or abode in which a group lives. Nevertheless, its plural form indicates that what is at stake is not merely an individual house but the living space in which a person or a group dwells.

In Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40, *diyār* is the space from which believers were driven out: الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِن دِيَارِهِم. Al-Ṭabarī identifies them as the believers who were expelled from Makkah by the Quraysh after suffering torture, abuse, and threats on account of their faith. Ibn Kathīr likewise links the verse with the Prophet Muḥammad and the Companions who were driven out of Makkah (Aṭ-Ṭabarī, 2001 [6]; Ibn Kathīr, 1999 [15]).

The Qur'an, however, does not state that every act of removing someone from their *diyār* is automatically an injustice. Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40 provides a crucial qualification: بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ (*bi-ghayri ḥaqq*), "without right". The phrase shows that the normative problem lies in the absence of a basis that justifies the expulsion. Ibn ʿĀshūr offers a highly relevant explanation: human beings have a right to remain in their place and to live with their community, a right rooted in *fiṭrah* (innate human nature), unless there is a basis recognised by the *sharīʿah* or by custom that justifies their removal. Expelling the believers merely because they said *rabbunā Allāh* ("Our Lord is God") is thus regarded as a manifest injustice (Ibn ʿĀshūr, 1997) [14]. Al-Ṭabarī also explains that they were not expelled for any offence that would justify expulsion, but because of their faith (Aṭ-Ṭabarī, 2001) [6]. *Bi-ghayri ḥaqq* therefore functions as a normative criterion distinguishing justifiable expulsion from unjust expulsion.

This dimension decisively shapes the direction of Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40. Al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī explains that the root meaning of *ḥaqq* (حقّ) is *al-muṭābaqah wa al-muwāfaqah* (المطابقة والموافقة), namely correspondence and conformity. He adds that *ḥaqq* may denote acts and words that occur as they ought to, in the proper measure, and at the proper time (Al-Aṣfahānī, n.d.) [2]. Lane gives a range of meanings for *ḥaqq* that includes rightness, justice, propriety, validity, and that which is due (Lane, 1865) [17]. In this context, *ḥaqq* concerns not only factual truth but also correctness, justice, and what is properly a right or an obligation. *Bi-ghayri ḥaqq* in Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40 therefore does not merely mean "without legal documentation" in the modern sense. The phrase is more fundamental: there is no true, legitimate, or justifiable basis that would make the expulsion proper.

This qualification is directly connected to the term *ẓulm* in the preceding verse. Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:39 states *udhina lilladhīna yuqātalūna bi-annahum ẓulimū*, "permission [to fight] is given to those who are fought against, because they have been wronged", and verse 40 then explains one concrete form of that wrong: *alladhīna ukhrijū min diyārihim bi-ghayri ḥaqq*. Linguistically, *ẓulm* covers meanings related to committing injustice, transgressing limits, or putting something in the wrong place. Al-Rāghib explains *ẓulm* as *waḍʿ al-shayʾ fī ghayri mawḍiʿihi al-mukhtaṣṣ bihi*, placing something where it does not belong, whether through deficiency, excess, or deviation from the proper limit (Al-Aṣfahānī, n.d.) [2]. Lane also records the meanings of *ẓalama* as doing wrong, injustice, harm, or transgressing a limit (Lane, 1865) [17]. *Ẓulm* in Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:39–40 thus need not be reduced to "violence". Violence may be part of *ẓulm*, but the verses show that expulsion from one's dwelling without just cause is itself already a form of injustice.

The relationship between verses 39 and 40 thus allows *ikhrāj* to be read as a form of *ẓulm* when expulsion is carried out without a just basis. Al-Qurṭubī also explicitly links expulsion from one's home with injustice and stresses the accountability of those who impose it (Al-Qurṭubī, 2006) [4]. In this context, *ikhrāj* describes not merely a change in someone's location, but an act of injustice that produces that change. The conceptual chain that begins to emerge is: *ẓulm* → *ikhrāj* → *diyār* → *bi-ghayri ḥaqq* (as a form of *ẓulm*).

The dimension of loss may also extend from *diyār* to *amwāl*. Q. al-Ḥashr [59]:8 describes the Muhājirūn as *alladhīna ukhrijū min diyārihim wa amwālihim*, "those who were driven out of their homes and their possessions". The pairing of *diyār* and *amwāl* is significant because it shows that expulsion may have wider material consequences. The two, however, need not be conflated: *diyār* refers to the space of dwelling, whereas *amwāl* refers to property. The Qur'an thus allows us to see the relationship between expulsion from living space and the loss of material resources, without making *ikhrāj* a direct synonym of *dispossession*. In his exegesis, al-Ṭabarī also explains that the Muhājirūn left their homes and property in the process of *hijrah* (Aṭ-Ṭabarī, 2001) [6].

At this point, *ikhrāj* can be formulated as an act with at least three elements: the actor who expels, the people who are expelled, and the dwelling space that is left behind. The passive form *ukhrijū* in Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40 foregrounds those who undergo the act, while the agent is not grammatically named; yet the context of the verse and the exegesis identify the Quraysh as the party responsible for the expulsion. This makes the reading of *ikhrāj* different from readings of displacement that focus solely on those who move. Textually, the Qur'an also directs attention to the act and the actors that produce the movement. At the same time, *ikhrāj* should not be simply equated with *hijrah*: *ikhrāj* denotes the act of causing someone to leave, whereas *hijrah* describes the act or journey of migrating, which in certain contexts arises as a response to oppression or expulsion.

Notably, the Qur'anic construction of *ikhrāj* does not stop at depicting the expelled as victims of injustice. In Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40, immediately after mentioning *alladhīna ukhrijū min diyārihim bi-ghayri ḥaqq*, the Qur'an turns to وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ, "had God not repelled some people by means of others". Al-Ṭabarī records several interpretations of *dafʿ*, including God's repelling of the polytheists through the Muslims, while Ibn ʿAṭiyyah sees it as a mechanism that prevents truth and religious practice from being subjugated by the dominant party (Aṭ-Ṭabarī, 2001) [6]. At this stage, *dafʿ* need not be narrowed down to war or military intervention; its appearance after *ikhrāj*, however, signals a shift from the act of expulsion to the question of preventing the destruction that domination can cause. The discussion of *dafʿ*, including its relationship with *nuṣrah* and *tamkīn*, is developed in a later subsection.

Taken as a whole, *ikhrāj min al-diyār* can be understood as the act of driving people out of their dwellings which, when carried out *bi-ghayri ḥaqq*, the Qur'an constructs as a form of *ẓulm*, and which in some contexts may be accompanied by the loss of property (*amwāl*) and may raise the question of how to respond to it. The concept should therefore not be equated from the outset with the modern category of *forced displacement*. What can first be established from the Qur'anic corpus is the structure summarised in Table 1: actor → expulsion from *diyār* → *bi-ghayri ḥaqq* as a normative criterion → *ẓulm* as a judgement on the act → possible loss of *amwāl* → transition to *dafʿ* as a question of preventing harm. This structure becomes the basis for bringing the Qur'anic construction into conversation with the discussion of place, dispossession, agency, and protection in CRS.

Table 1: The Qur'anic conceptual network of *ikhrāj min al-diyār*

Concept	Key verse(s)	Core meaning	Analytical function
Ikhrāj (root *kh-r-j*, Form IV)	Q. 2:84–85; Q. 22:40; Q. 59:2, 8	Causing someone to go out; expel, eject, dislodge	Identifies expulsion as an act with an agent and an object
Diyār (pl. of *dār*)	Q. 2:84–85; Q. 22:40	Dwellings; the living space of a person or group	Locates what is lost: the relationship with a place of life
Bi-ghayri ḥaqq	Q. 22:40	Without a true, legitimate, or justifiable basis	Normative criterion separating just from unjust expulsion
Ẓulm	Q. 22:39	Injustice; putting something where it does not belong	Moral judgement on the act of expulsion
Amwāl	Q. 59:8	Property; material possessions	Material dimension of loss accompanying expulsion
*Daf*ʿ	Q. 22:40; Q. 2:251	Repelling, restraining, or warding off harm	Shifts analysis to restraining the harm that produces expulsion

Source: Author's analysis of the Qur'anic text, lexicons, and classical exegesis.

From expulsion to displacement: Place, dispossession, agency, and protection

In RFMS, forced movement is no longer understood solely through the refugee category and protection needs, but also through history, power structures, and the conditions that produce displacement. This development is visible in Owen's (2024) [23] proposal to consider displacement as a broader organising concept for the study of forced movement, and in the critical responses that followed (pp. 273–279). The debate shows that the issue is not merely how to identify people who have moved, but how to understand the relationship between people, place, the structures that shape displacement, and the possibility of restoring justice. This article takes part in that conversation by entering into a specific dialogue with CRS, which has developed critiques of power relations, dispossession, and the formation of the refugee subject. The critique advanced here, then, is not that RFMS or CRS ignore the perpetrators of expulsion, but that the reconstruction of *ikhrāj min al-diyār* can bring these established debates into contact with a conceptual chain from the Qur'anic tradition. This chain connects the act of expulsion, dwelling, the basis of legitimacy, injustice, material loss, and the question of responding to harm. The contribution sought is not terminological equivalence between the Qur'an and RFMS, but the possibility of a more integrated reading through dialogue between knowledge traditions.

The first dimension of this dialogue is *place*, understood as a living space shaped by social relations, experience, attachment, and power. Owen (2024) [23] notes that the concept of displacement can widen attention from physical mobility to the harms that arise when people's relationship with their place is disrupted (pp. 274–277). Akdeniz (2024) [1] shows how narratives of loss, attachment to home, and hope of return help refugees sustain the meaning of place amid protracted displacement (pp. 25–30). Ma (2023) [19], meanwhile, shows how displacement can be understood through its entanglement with colonialism, racialisation, and structural violence, as well as with practices of resistance. These works show that the expansion of the concept of displacement is already a site of internal debate within RFMS, not an untouched space. It is here that *ikhrāj min al-diyār* can contribute a conceptual perspective: Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40 does not simply name people who have moved, but formulates the act of driving them out of their *diyār* under the condition of *bi-ghayri ḥaqq*. *Diyār* thus appears in direct relation to an act and to a question of legitimacy. Read together with the literature on place, this construction allows expulsion to be analysed not only as a change of location, but as an act that severs or disrupts people's relationship with their living space while raising the question of who has the authority to carry out such an act, and on what basis. The contribution of the Qur'anic reading lies in linking place, the act of expulsion, and the normative basis that the text calls into question, rather than in expanding the meaning of *diyār* into an equivalent of modern notions of homeland or sovereignty.

The relationship between place and power is also a concern of Arat-Koç (2020) [5] in her decolonial critique of refugee studies. She shows that the experiences of refugees and the dispossession of Indigenous peoples may intersect in histories of land loss and subordinate relations with the state, but that such intersections do not automatically give rise to political solidarity. Solidarity requires a *politics of place*, namely attention to the history, position, and power relations that shape each group's experience (pp. 372–379). This argument is important for the reading of *ikhrāj* because it shows that expulsion cannot be adequately understood without attending to the relations that enable some actors to drive others out of their living space. The Qur'anic verses, however, provide a more specific point of entry: expulsion from *diyār* is linked with *bi-ghayri ḥaqq* and, in the preceding verse,

with the condition of those who *ẓulimū* (were wronged). This relationship allows questions about contested space to become questions about action, perpetrators, and legitimacy as well. Within this frame, the analysis of place does not stop at how space is formed or contested, but also examines how the act of expulsion is judged as injustice in the textual construction of the Qur'an. This reading brings the CRS critique of power relations together with the normative dimension of the Qur'an without assuming that both share an identical epistemological foundation. The second dimension is *dispossession*, namely loss relating to rights, resources, and the material conditions of life. Q. al-Ḥashr [59]:8 describes the Muhājirūn as people driven out of their homes and their property: *alladhīna ukhrijū min diyārihim wa amwālihim*. The mention of *diyār* and *amwāl* side by side provides a textual basis for reading the loss of dwelling and the loss of material resources as two related dimensions of the experience of expulsion. This relationship deepens the dialogue with the CRS literature on dispossession, since expulsion can change not only where people live but also their access to the resources that sustain life. Maqusi's (2021) [20] study of Palestinian refugee camps, for instance, shows that displacement and camp life are entangled with the politics of space, material regulation, and relations between refugees, humanitarian agencies, and host governments (pp. 2–6). Spaces of refuge, therefore, cannot be treated as neutral containers that are occupied only after displacement; they are themselves shaped by political and material conditions that constrain the lives of their inhabitants. By bringing Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40 and Q. al-Ḥashr [59]:8 together, this study identifies two complementary articulations: expulsion without right, and expulsion mentioned together with the loss of property. The result is an understanding of *ikhrāj* as a problem with spatial and material dimensions, so that the loss of dwelling and the loss of resources can be analysed in relation to one another rather than as fully separate categories.

The third dimension concerns *agency*, the capacity of those who are expelled to act, rebuild their lives, maintain social relations, and negotiate space under constraint. The critique of portraying refugees as passive victims has become an important part of critical scholarship. Krause and Schmidt (2020) [16], for instance, show that self-reliance and resilience policies may continue to sustain categories of vulnerability even while rhetorically encouraging refugees to become self-sufficient actors. Institutional criteria of self-reliance risk turning refugees into *actors-to-be*, whose capacities are recognised only when they meet standards defined from outside (pp. 22–24). Maqusi (2021) [20], meanwhile, shows how Palestinian refugees shape and negotiate space within the camp, including through practices that exceed the spatial management designs of aid agencies and host governments. Both studies affirm that agency must be read in relation to structures that both constrain and shape the possibilities of action. A Qur'anic reading can enrich this dialogue through the sequence of Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:38–41, which moves from the protection of believers, to the condition of those who are wronged and expelled, and on to *daf*ʿ (دفع), support, and *tamkīn*. This sequence directs attention not only to those targeted by expulsion, but also to the capacity to respond to injustice and the conditions that make such action possible. In this dialogue, agency is not reduced to an individual's ability to survive; it also concerns the relationship between action, support, collective capacity, and structures of power.

The fourth dimension is *protection*. In RFMS, protection relates to the rights and needs of displaced people, while critical scholarship also questions the political and institutional conditions that shape their experience. Recent debates on the concept of displacement show that broadening analytical categories alone does not resolve the problem of justice. Owen (2024) [23] proposes that the study of forced movement consider the concept of displacement more broadly, while Fynn Bruey et al. (2024) [12] emphasise placing the knowledge and lived experience of displaced people at the centre as a source for rethinking the legal and institutional frameworks of protection (pp. 115–126). This conversation provides the context for reading Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:38–41, particularly the relationship between *ikhrāj* and *daf*ʿ. Verse 40 links expulsion without right with a statement about *daf*ʿ and the prevention of the destruction of places of worship, while Q. al-Baqarah [2]:251 links the principle of *daf*ʿ with the prevention of *fasād al-arḍ* (corruption of the earth). This comparison opens space for examining protection not only as dealing with the situation after expulsion, but also as restraining the harm that threatens shared life. This reading does not presuppose that RFMS or CRS have neglected prevention. Rather, it positions *daf*ʿ as an additional conceptual resource that can enter into dialogue with existing discussions of structure, responsibility, and the possibility of transformation.

In this context, *daf*ʿ needs to be analysed as a concept with greater depth than the common equivalent "protection". Textually, Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40 uses the construction *wa-lawlā daf*ʿ*u Allāhi al-nāsa ba*ʿ*ḍahum bi-ba*ʿ*ḍ*, followed by a reference to the destruction of places of worship should this mechanism not operate. Q. al-Baqarah [2]:251 uses a similar construction but links it with *fasād al-arḍ*. The shared structure of the two verses, together with their differing consequences, allows *daf*ʿ to be read as a mechanism that restrains harm, both in the context of the destruction of places of worship and in the context of wider corruption. Al-Ṭabarī's commentary on Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40 shows that explanations of *daf*ʿ are not limited to a single form of action. The reports he compiles include defence against attackers, but also mechanisms that prevent people from wronging one another, including

testimony and authority that restrain transgression (Aṭ-Ṭabarī, 2001) [6]. This diversity of interpretation is important because it shows that *dafʿ* cannot be reduced to military intervention. It must be understood through the relationship between the act of restraining harm, the means that make such action possible, and the context of injustice being confronted.

This reading yields an important conceptual step for the dialogue with CRS. Attention to expulsion can be widened from the condition of the expelled to the mechanisms that make it possible to restrain expulsion and harm. If *ikhrāj* directs attention to the act of driving people out of their dwellings, *dafʿ* directs attention to the response that prevents harmful acts or conditions from continuing. This relationship becomes more meaningful when read together with *nuṣrah* and *tamkīn* in Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40–41. *Nuṣrah* emphasises support, while *tamkīn* concerns the position or capacity that enables an action to be carried out. The three terms are not interchangeable, but their textual relationship raises questions about who is able to respond to injustice, how support is realised, and how capacity is used. Here, *dafʿ* provides an analytical direction that connects protection with agency and responsibility, rather than treating protection merely as a service provided after displacement has occurred (Al-Qurṭubī, 2006 [4]; Aṭ-Ṭabarī, 2001 [6]; Ibn Kathīr, 1999 [15]).

From this point, the dialogue with CRS moves beyond a comparison of terms towards questions of how knowledge is built. Critical scholarship has shown that forced displacement is bound up with colonial history, power relations, dispossession, and inequalities that shape the experience of expelled communities (Lemberg-Pedersen et al., 2024) [18]. The Qur'anic reading need not claim that these problems have been ignored in RFMS or CRS. Its contribution lies in reconstructing a chain of concepts connecting *ikhrāj*, *diyār*, *bi-ghayri ḥaqq*, *ẓulm*, *amwāl*, and *dafʿ*, and then testing the analytical power of that chain in dialogue with contemporary debates. The relationship between *ikhrāj* and *bi-ghayri ḥaqq* places the basis of legitimacy at the heart of the problem of expulsion; the relationship between *diyār* and *amwāl* reveals the spatial and material dimensions of loss; and *dafʿ*, *nuṣrah*, and *tamkīn* direct attention to response, support, and the capacity to act. *Ikhrāj min al-diyār* thus provides a starting point for understanding expulsion as an act involving people, place, legitimacy, and possible loss, while *dafʿ* opens the question of responding to injustice and restraining harm. This dialogue positions the Qur'anic tradition as a source of knowledge production that participates in critical conversations on forced displacement, not by replacing one tradition with another, but by bringing them together so that the resulting conceptual relationships can widen questions, deepen analysis, and foster a more comprehensive understanding of expulsion and of responsibility for the conditions that produce it.

Beyond protection after displacement: *Dafʿ*, *nuṣrah*, and *tamkīn* as Qur'anic resources for ending unjust expulsion

This discussion proceeds from a closer examination of *dafʿ* (دفع) in Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40 and Q. al-Baqarah [2]:251. The two verses share the same core structure, *dafʿu Allāhi al-nāsa baʿḍahum bi-baʿḍin*: God repels or restrains some people by means of others. Yet the consequences they state differ. Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40 directs attention to the destruction of places of worship, while Q. al-Baqarah [2]:251 links the absence of *dafʿ* with *fasād al-arḍ*, the corruption of the earth. This difference matters: *dafʿ* is concerned not only with the safety of a particular group but also with the conditions that allow social and religious life to be spared from widespread harm (Al-Qurṭubī, 2006 [4]; Aṭ-Ṭabarī, 2001 [6]).

The linguistic evidence lies in the phrase بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ (*baʿḍahum bi-baʿḍ*). In this construction, *dafʿ* is stated to occur through relations among human beings. The verse does not stop at declaring that God protects; it depicts the repelling of harm through some people acting upon others. Textually, then, human beings are present within the mechanism of *dafʿ* as parties involved in its operation. This form opens space for reading human agency without removing the theological attribution of the act to God.

The consequence for this study is fundamental. Protection cannot be understood only as the condition in which victims obtain a safe place after expulsion; it must also be read through actions that restrain the injustice and harm that make expulsion possible. This reading does not make *dafʿ* a direct synonym for the modern concepts of *protection*, *deterrence*, or *intervention*. Instead, it offers a distinctive conceptual relationship: when harm arises from human action, its prevention may likewise involve human action that limits, confronts, or obstructs that harm.

Classical exegesis supports a reading that does not narrow *dafʿ* to passive protection. In interpreting Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40, al-Ṭabarī compiles explanations that link *dafʿ* with various forms of action, including resistance to aggressors, testimony, and authority that prevents people from committing injustice. This diversity of interpretation shows that the mechanism of *dafʿ* is not confined to a single instrument (Aṭ-Ṭabarī, 2001) [6]. Al-

Qurṭubī, in discussing Q. al-Baqarah [2]:251, likewise describes a range of social and normative mechanisms that prevent people from attacking one another and seizing one another's rights (Al-Qurṭubī, 2006) [4]. Physical action may thus be one form of *dafʿ*, but not its only form.

Ibn ʿĀshūr's reading adds an important dimension. In his explanation of Q. al-Baqarah [2]:251, the attribution of *dafʿ* to God does not negate the role of human beings as its direct agents. The relationship can be understood through *majāz ʿaqlī* (rational metonymy): an act is attributed to the one who brings about or enables its cause, even though its direct performers are human beings (Ibn ʿĀshūr, 1997) [14]. This exegetical frame helps explain how divine protection and human agency can coexist within a single conceptual construction. Human beings are not merely recipients of protection; they can also be the intermediaries of action that restrains harm.

It is here that *dafʿ* makes an important contribution to the dialogue with CRS. Critical refugee scholarship has shown that forced displacement is bound up with political structures, colonial history, control over space, and unequal capacities to determine one's life (Arat-Koç, 2020 [5]; Lemberg-Pedersen et al., 2024 [18]). The Qur'anic reconstruction adds a question that is at once normative and operational: what mechanisms can restrain those who produce expulsion, and how do actions undertaken by others relate to ending that harm? This question shifts attention from protection as the management of consequences towards protection that also confronts the conditions producing those consequences.

This conceptual reading needs to be tested against historical context so that *dafʿ* does not remain an abstract idea. In Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:39–40, permission to confront those who fought the believers appears only after two things are explicitly stated: they had been wronged, and they had been driven out of their homes without right. The order of the verses thus links the experience of expulsion with the legitimacy of confronting aggression. *Dafʿ* in the following clause then widens the scope of the issue: confronting aggression concerns not only the fate of the expelled community, but also the possible destruction of the places of worship of other communities (Q. 22:39–40). In al-Ṭabarī's commentary, the context of the believers' expulsion from Makkah explains the concrete dimension of *bi-ghayri ḥaqq*. Expulsion was not mere geographical movement but an act committed against a group persecuted for its beliefs. Meanwhile, the broader interpretation of *dafʿ* shows that the continuity of social life is not self-sustaining; there are human actions and social mechanisms that prevent some parties from acting arbitrarily (Aṭ-Ṭabarī, 2001) [6]. The historical context of the verse thus shows a movement from recognising injustice to addressing the actions that can confront and limit it.

This point gains further depth through Q. al-Baqarah [2]:84–85. These verses recall a covenant that prohibited bloodshed and the expulsion of one's own people from their homes, and then criticise the violation of that covenant. Expulsion here is placed within social relations and obligations that ought to bind a community. *Ikhrāj* is therefore not only a matter of individual fate; it can signal the breakdown of the order of human relations when the obligation to respect life and dwelling is violated (Q. 2:84–85). The same dimension appears in Q. al-Ḥashr [59]:8, which describes the Muhājirūn as people driven out of their homes and property. The combination of *diyār* and *amwāl* affirms that expulsion may involve the loss of living space together with the loss of material resources. The relationship between the two need not be understood as a sequence that is always the same in every case; what matters is that the verse shows how the loss of dwelling and the loss of property can be interconnected in the experience of expulsion, so that recovery cannot be judged solely by the availability of temporary shelter (Q. 59:8; Al-Khaghani, 2023 [3]).

From this sequence, early Islamic history offers two important tests for the reading of *dafʿ*. First, expulsion from one's home is an act that can form the basis for recognising injustice, not merely a side-effect of conflict. Second, the response to injustice does not end with recording the suffering of the expelled, but also concerns action that confronts those who carry out the expulsion and prevents further harm. Both make *dafʿ* relevant to a reading of *ikhrāj min al-diyār*: the concept of expulsion identifies the form of injustice that occurs, while *dafʿ* opens the question of the actions that restrain or confront it. This historical test does not mean, however, that every modern conflict can be simply equated with the context of revelation, or that a single historical form of response must be applied identically today. What can be maintained conceptually is a more fundamental relationship: when people carry out expulsion without right, the ethical problem is not resolved by recognising the status of the expelled; it also demands attention to the act, the perpetrators, and the mechanisms that allow expulsion to take place. This is the point that can be carried into a contemporary dialogue with CRS.

The relationship between *dafʿ*, *nuṣrah*, and *tamkīn* clarifies how the Qur'an links the response to injustice with the conditions that allow life to resume. The three are not synonyms and need not appear as three stages in a fixed order. Read in the context of Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:38–41, however, they form a productive chain of meaning. First, *dafʿ*

highlights the act of repelling, warding off, or obstructing what threatens and destroys. Second, *nuṣrah* emphasises help or support for those who need it in facing a given situation. Third, *tamkīn* directs attention to the condition in which a person or community obtains the position, capacity, or opportunity to carry out its life and responsibilities. This difference in emphasis is important: restraining aggression is not identical with providing aid, and providing aid does not always mean restoring a community's capacity to determine its future.

The context of Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40–41 is crucial for this reading. After mentioning expulsion and the possible destruction of places of worship, the next verse speaks of those who, if given a firm position in the land, establish prayer, pay *zakāh*, enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong. Textually, verse 41 should not be treated as a lexical definition of *daf*ʿ or as proof that *tamkīn* is always the direct outcome of every protective action. Nevertheless, the arrangement of the verses provides a wider horizon: the response to injustice does not end with the emergency, but relates to the possibility that a community will regain the capacity to lead a meaningful life and to fulfil its social responsibilities.

This reading also prevents *nuṣrah* from being narrowed to sympathy or statements of support. In the context of expulsion, support may take the form of providing aid, recognising rights, defending living space, strengthening community capacity, or political and legal action that limits the continuation of injustice. These forms do not automatically carry the same weight or effectiveness. Each must be assessed on the basis of what is actually done, who benefits, and what change it produces in the conditions of expulsion. An important finding follows: the success of a response to expulsion cannot be measured only by how much aid is delivered, but also by whether the action helps to stop the conditions that produce expulsion and restores the capacity to live of those affected. Within this frame, *nuṣrah* attends to the support received, *tamkīn* to the conditions that enable a community to resume its life and responsibilities, while *daf*ʿ keeps open the question of how harmful action can be restrained or confronted.

This chain also enriches the discussion of agency. Expelled people are not merely recipients of aid, and those who provide aid are not always the only agents of change. Residents who sustain their community, civil society organisations, humanitarian agencies, courts, states, and multilateral institutions may play different roles. The analysis must attend to the relationship between the capacities and responsibilities of each, rather than assuming that all actors hold equal power. In this respect, *tamkīn* can become a critical question: does an action described as support in fact make a community more dependent, or does it help restore its ability to determine its own life and future?

Palestine is an important present-day context for testing the relevance of this reading, because expulsion there is not confined to a single event or wave of displacement. The history of Palestinian refugees includes the mass displacement of 1948, the displacement of 1967, and continuing forms of expulsion and forcible transfer in the context of occupation, settlement expansion, house demolitions, settler violence, and restricted access to land. This history shows that Palestinian displacement cannot be understood merely as the movement of a population from one location to another. The loss of homes, livelihoods, access to land, and the possibility of returning to one's place of origin are interconnected dimensions. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 (III), adopted on 11 December 1948, states that refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which should be made good under the principles of international law (United Nations General Assembly, 1948) [28]. Notwithstanding political and legal debates about its implementation and scope, the resolution shows that the question of Palestinian refugees has from the outset exceeded the need for emergency assistance; it encompasses homes, property, and the possibility of restoring the relationship with the place of origin.

From the perspective of this study, this condition can be read through the relationship between *diyār* and *amwāl* in the Qur'an. *Diyār* directs attention to the dwelling as a living space, while *amwāl* reveals the material dimension accompanying the experience of expulsion. Together they help identify what is lost when people are forced to leave their place of life. The Qur'anic reading, however, does not stop at identifying loss. The next questions are how such loss can be prevented from continuing, how the rights and capacities of those affected can be sustained, and how other parties can act to confront the conditions that produce expulsion.

One relevant form of agency in the Palestinian context is *ṣumūd*, which broadly denotes steadfastness or the continuity of life under pressure. Marie et al. (2018) [21] describe *ṣumūd* as a socio-political concept relating to the ways Palestinians endure conditions of occupation, chronic hardship, scarce resources, and limited infrastructure. *Ṣumūd* is thus not merely an individual mental attitude; it may include practices of sustaining everyday life,

maintaining a relationship with the land, supporting the community, and building collective capacity to face pressure. Studies of Palestinian popular resistance likewise show that community practices may be directed towards several interrelated aims: exposing injustice, limiting the domination of those in power, strengthening the community, sustaining the capacity to act, and pursuing justice and the right of return (Qumsiyeh, 2011) [24]. Dana (2020) [10] shows that the Palestinian resistance economy is connected with land, agriculture, economic self-reliance, grassroots organisation, and community participation in many areas of life (pp. 192–204). These findings show that agency does not take place only in the form of direct confrontation. Maintaining livelihoods, building solidarity, organising education, sustaining the community's presence, and refusing practices that erode the capacity to live can also be part of the response to oppressive structures.

The connection with *daf*ʿ lies in this dimension of action. *Ṣumūd* is not identical with *daf*ʿ: the former has a history and meaning specific to the Palestinian experience, while the latter is a Qur'anic concept reconstructed in this study. Both, however, meet in the question of how people confront conditions that threaten the continuity of life. If *ṣumūd* shows a form of community agency in sustaining life and space, *daf*ʿ provides a framework for asking how such action, together with the actions of other actors, can restrain harm and obstruct the domination that produces expulsion. This reading also avoids interpreting steadfastness as an obligation for victims to keep enduring without support. Community steadfastness cannot be used as a reason to shift all responsibility onto those who experience expulsion. On the contrary, once community agency is acknowledged, the question of other actors' responsibility becomes even more important: who has the capacity to help, to stop violence, to reduce the pressures forcing people to leave, and to restore the conditions that allow them to remain in their place? Recognition of victims' agency must go hand in hand with analysis of power asymmetries and of the responsibilities of those able to act.

If *daf*ʿ is read as action that restrains harm through the role of some people in relation to others, the Palestinian context shows that its instruments may take several distinct forms (Table 2). These instruments should not be judged solely by declarations of support or by the identity of those who use them, but by demonstrable actions and effects. First, community agency that sustains the life and presence of the community: *ṣumūd*, grassroots organisation, local solidarity, and efforts to maintain access to land and livelihoods show that affected communities are not passive objects of policy and conflict, although community agency cannot by itself halt the entire structure of coercion. Second, humanitarian aid and protection organisations: shelter, food, health care, education, and basic needs can reduce the immediate impact of expulsion, yet aid does not automatically end the processes that produce displacement. The 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan for the occupied Palestinian territory, for example, notes that movement restrictions continue to impede access to health care, education, livelihoods, and economic opportunities, and highlights demolitions and confiscations of structures as well as restrictions on humanitarian programmes (OCHA, 2023) [22]. Emergency aid is therefore an important instrument, but it cannot be the sole measure of successful *daf*ʿ while conditions of coercion persist.

Third, legal mechanisms and international diplomacy. United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016) reaffirms that the establishment of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law (United Nations Security Council, 2016, para. 1) [29]. In 2023, UN officials and delegates again expressed concern about settlement expansion, the demolition of Palestinian structures, daily violence, and their impact on the prospects for a political settlement (United Nations Department of Global Communications, 2023) [27]. Such mechanisms show the existence of normative and diplomatic instruments that can be used to deny legitimacy to practices that narrow the living space of Palestinians. Fourth, action by states and institutions with political or legal capacity. In the reading of *daf*ʿ, the capacity to act raises the question of responsibility: do states and institutions with influence use their capacity to limit actions that produce expulsion, support the protection of civilians, uphold legal obligations, and promote the restoration of rights? This question does not imply that every form of intervention is automatically right or effective; rather, it demands an assessment of the form of action, its legal basis, its impact on the community, and whether it actually reduces the conditions that allow injustice to continue. Fifth, transnational support and public solidarity. Civil society campaigns, academic networks, advocacy, documentation of violations, and solidarity mobilisation can help bring the experience of affected communities into the public sphere and press actors who hold authority. Their effectiveness should be assessed through evidence of policy change, access to protection, strengthened community capacity, or reduction of the practices that cause expulsion, not merely through the scale of public attention.

Table 2: Instruments of *dafʿ* in the Palestinian context

Instrument	Examples	What it can do	Limits and criteria of assessment
Community agency	*Ṣumūd*, grassroots organisation, local solidarity, maintaining access to land and livelihoods	Sustains community life and presence; resists pressures to leave	Cannot alone halt structures of coercion; must be read with other actors' capacities
Humanitarian aid and protection	Shelter, food, health care, education, basic needs	Reduces the immediate impact of expulsion	Does not end the processes producing displacement; not the sole measure of success
Law and diplomacy	UNGA Res. 194 (III); UNSC Res. 2334 (2016); Security Council debates	Denies legitimacy to practices that narrow living space	Effect depends on implementation and enforcement
States and institutions	Use of political, legal, and diplomatic influence	Can limit expulsion, protect civilians, and restore rights	Judged by form, legal basis, impact, and actual reduction of injustice
Transnational solidarity	Campaigns, academic networks, advocacy, documentation	Brings affected communities' experience into the public sphere; presses authorities	Judged by evidence of change, not by the scale of attention

Source: Author's synthesis from the Qur'anic reading and the sources cited in the text.

These five forms are neither an exhaustive list nor a hierarchy. Their function is to show that *dafʿ* can be read as a matter of relations between actions and between actors. Communities that sustain their presence, agencies that provide aid, organisations that document violations, states that use diplomatic influence, and institutions that apply the law may perform different functions in confronting harm. This reading also makes it possible to analyse the failure of *dafʿ*: not only when there is no aid, but also when the available actions do not touch the conditions that continue to produce expulsion.

Discussion and conclusion

Drawing on textual, exegetical, historical, and Palestinian readings, the contribution of this study can be formulated in three interrelated findings. First, the Qur'an constructs expulsion as an act with dimensions of place, right, and injustice. In Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:39–40, expulsion from *diyār* is linked with the condition of being wronged and with the phrase *bi-ghayri ḥaqq*; in Q. al-Ḥashr [59]:8, expulsion from one's dwelling is also linked with the loss of property. This chain moves the analysis from displacement as a geographical event towards an act that affects rights, material life, and people's relationship with their living space.

Second, the Qur'an places action against harm as an important part of the response to expulsion. The construction *wa lawlā dafʿu Allāhi al-nāsa baʿḍahum bi-baʿḍin* in Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:40 and Q. al-Baqarah [2]:251 shows that the prevention of harm involves relations among human beings. The exegetes' explanations of the various mechanisms of *dafʿ* reinforce the reading that the response is not limited to a single form of action. This provides a basis for analysing the roles of communities, humanitarian agencies, states, legal mechanisms, and transnational solidarity as instruments with different functions in confronting expulsion and harm.

Third, the relationship with *nuṣrah* and *tamkīn* broadens the assessment of a response's success. Support should be judged not only by the amount of aid delivered, but also by its relationship to ending coercion and restoring the community's capacity to live. In this perspective, *dafʿ* directs attention to action that restrains harm, *nuṣrah* emphasises support, and *tamkīn* highlights the capacity that allows life and social responsibility to be carried out. The three do not form a mechanical formula but provide complementary analytical dimensions.

These findings enrich the dialogue with CRS without positioning the Qur'anic tradition as a substitute for the critical approaches developed within it. CRS has paid attention to colonial history, power relations, agency, dispossession, and the conditions that produce forced displacement. The contribution of this study is to bring these concerns together with Qur'anic conceptual relationships that explicitly connect expulsion without right, injustice, and action to restrain harm. The Islamic tradition thus participates in the formation of knowledge, rather than merely supplying moral justification for categories constructed elsewhere. The main conceptual contribution is to shift the horizon of analysis from protection after expulsion towards the relationship between expulsion, the action that restrains it, support for those affected, and the restoration of their capacity to live. In this sense, *dafʿ* is not

simply an additional concept in reading the verses on expulsion; it becomes the axis connecting the diagnosis of injustice with questions of action, capacity, and responsibility, while *nuṣrah* and *tamkīn* extend the discussion from confronting harm to support and the possible restoration of life. Through this relationship the Qur'an can engage progressively with CRS: not by claiming that the Qur'anic tradition already provides a complete modern theory of refugees, but by showing that its sources contain conceptual relationships that can deepen how we understand and confront forced expulsion.

In conclusion, this study shows that *ikhrāj min al-diyār* in the Qur'an cannot be understood merely as the movement of people from one place to another. Through a reading of Q. al-Ḥajj [22]:39–40, Q. al-Baqarah [2]:84–85, and Q. al-Ḥashr [59]:8, expulsion is constructed as an act involving relations between the perpetrator, the expelled, the dwelling (*diyār*), and the basis of the act's legitimacy. The phrase *bi-ghayri ḥaqq* affirms the normative dimension of expulsion, while its link with *ẓulm* shows that expulsion without a just basis is a form of injustice; the pairing of *diyār* with *amwāl* reveals that expulsion may involve the loss of living space together with material resources. The study further finds that *dafʿ* extends the discussion from recognising injustice to acting to restrain the harm it causes, and that, read together with *nuṣrah* and *tamkīn*, these concepts open interrelated but distinct analytical dimensions: restraining harm, providing support, and restoring the capacity to live and the responsibilities of those affected. The historical reading and the Palestinian context up to 2023 show the relevance of this framework for examining diverse responses, from community agency and humanitarian aid to legal mechanisms, diplomacy, and transnational solidarity, without assuming that all have the same function or effectiveness.

This study has several limitations that can inform future research. First, as library research, it relies on textual sources and does not include the voices of displaced communities themselves; future studies could combine this conceptual framework with empirical research on how displaced Muslim communities understand expulsion, support, and recovery. Second, the exegetical reading focuses on a limited set of classical and modern commentaries; including a wider range of exegetical traditions, including contemporary and non-Sunni works, would test the robustness of the reconstruction. Third, the Palestinian case is used illustratively and covers developments up to 2023; other contexts of forced displacement, such as Rohingya or Syrian displacement, could be examined to assess the transferability of the *ikhrāj–dafʿ–nuṣrah–tamkīn* framework.

Implications

The findings of this study carry implications for RFMS and CRS. Responses to forced displacement need to be treated as covering two domains at once: addressing the impact of expulsion and acting on the conditions that produce it. The two are not substitutes for each other. Emergency protection remains necessary, but it cannot replace efforts to confront violence, coercion, the loss of living space, and obstacles to the restoration of rights; conversely, efforts to end the conditions that produce expulsion must also attend to the safety, needs, and agency of those already affected. The success of a response, therefore, should not be judged only by the availability of assistance after displacement, but also by the extent to which injustice is limited and the capacity to live of those affected is restored. For researchers, educators, faith-based organisations, and humanitarian practitioners, the *ikhrāj–dafʿ–nuṣrah–tamkīn* framework offers a set of evaluative questions grounded in the Islamic tradition: who is responsible for the expulsion, on what basis it is contested, what restrains it, what support is given, and whether that support restores the community's capacity to determine its own future. More broadly, the study shows that the Islamic intellectual tradition can participate as a source of knowledge production in the decolonisation and pluralisation of refugee studies.

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