

International Political Dynamics and Islamic Jurisprudence: Understanding the Roots of Terrorism

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the intricate challenges involved in defining terrorism, emphasizing the political instrumentalization of Islam as a perceived threat. It delves into the multifaceted nature of terrorism by exploring various definitions and the underlying political motivations. The study then transitions to an in-depth analysis of Islamic jurisprudence's unequivocal stance against violence and terrorism, highlighting the consistent and unanimous condemnation by Islamic scholars. By scrutinizing the ethical principles that govern warfare in Islam, including the protection of non-combatants and the conditions under which violence is permissible, the paper offers a nuanced and comprehensive perspective on how Islamic teachings fundamentally oppose terrorism. This analysis is supported by references to primary Islamic texts (Quran and Hadith) and classical jurisprudential sources, ensuring a thorough understanding of Islamic legal principles. Furthermore, the paper addresses the broader socio-political implications of framing Islam as synonymous with terrorism. It examines the impact of this narrative on public perceptions, policy-making, and the rise of Islamophobia. The study also considers the strategic motivations behind this framing, particularly in the context of post-9/11 geopolitical dynamics and the subsequent "War on Terror." This paper aims to explore Islamic teachings that prohibit violence and terrorism, the debates among Islamic scholars regarding the punishment for such acts, and the geopolitical motivations behind portraying Islam as a threat. By doing so, it seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of this framing on international relations, public perceptions, and counter-terrorism strategies. The paper concludes with a set of strategic recommendations aimed at promoting accurate representations of Islam. These recommendations emphasize the importance of nuanced and informed public discourse, the role of educational initiatives in dispelling myths and stereotypes, and the need for collaborative international efforts to enhance global counter-terrorism strategies. Additionally, the paper calls for fostering international cooperation to address the root causes of terrorism, such as political repression, socio-economic inequalities, and foreign interventions, thereby promoting a more just and peaceful global order.

Keywords: Terrorism, Islamic Jurisprudence, Political Instrumentalization, Counter-Terrorism Strategies

INTRODUCTION

The conclusion of the Cold War marked a significant transformation in global power dynamics, with the United States emerging as the preeminent superpower. This shift led to a strategic reorientation in U.S. foreign policy, where the need to justify its hegemonic ambitions necessitated the creation of a new adversary. In this context, Islam was increasingly framed as synonymous with terrorism. This narrative was not only used to legitimize military interventions but also to shape public perceptions and counter-terrorism policies. The portrayal of Islam as a global threat has had profound implications for international relations, contributing to the rise of Islamophobia and the erosion of civil liberties in many countries. This paper aims to explore the association between Islam and terrorism from both a jurisprudential and strategic-political perspective, examining Islamic teachings on violence and terrorism, debates among Islamic scholars, and the geopolitical motivations behind the portrayal of Islam as a threat. By doing so, it seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of this framing on international relations, public perceptions, and counter-terrorism strategies.

The research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing textual analysis to explore primary Islamic texts (Quran and Hadith) and classical jurisprudential sources. This methodology aims to understand Islamic teachings on violence and terrorism, and the strategic-political narratives that associate Islam with terrorism. By examining these texts and narratives, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between Islam and terrorism, grounded in theoretical analysis and scholarly interpretation.

This study seeks to answer several key questions: How do Islamic teachings define and address terrorism and violence? What are the primary jurisprudential debates among Islamic scholars regarding the classification of

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terrorism? How has the strategic framing of Islam as synonymous with terrorism impacted global security policies and public perceptions? What are the implications of this framing for Muslim communities and international relations?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The literature review encompasses existing works on the association between Islam and terrorism, focusing on Islamic jurisprudence, political instrumentalization, and counter-terrorism strategies. Ahmed (2013) explores the psychological and social impacts of global politics on Muslim identity, emphasizing the intersection of honor, violence, and cultural perceptions in the post-9/11 world. Asad (2007) analyzes the phenomenon of suicide bombing, examining its historical context and moral and political implications, and challenges conventional Western perspectives on terrorism and martyrdom. Cook (2005) provides a historical and theological analysis of the concept of jihad, tracing its evolution from early Islamic traditions to contemporary interpretations and misinterpretations. Esposito (2002) examines the roots of Islamic extremism and terrorism, distinguishing between mainstream Islamic beliefs and radical ideologies that justify violence. Juergensmeyer (2003) investigates the rise of religious violence globally, exploring the motivations and justifications used by religious extremists across different faiths, including Islam. Kepel (2004) discusses the ideological battle within Islam and between Islam and the West, analyzing how this conflict shapes global politics and perceptions. Sageman (2004) provides an in-depth analysis of terrorist networks, focusing on the social and psychological factors that drive individuals to join extremist groups and commit acts of terrorism. These works collectively provide a multifaceted understanding of the complex relationship between Islam and terrorism, highlighting the diversity of interpretations and the socio-political contexts in which these narratives evolve.

This article adds to the existing literature by providing an in-depth analysis of the association between Islam and terrorism from both a jurisprudential and strategic-political perspective. It offers a detailed examination of Islamic teachings on violence and terrorism, highlighting the diversity of interpretations within Islamic scholarship. Additionally, it addresses the political instrumentalization of Islam as a threat, providing a critical analysis of the geopolitical motivations behind this narrative. By integrating these perspectives, the article contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the issue and offers practical recommendations for promoting accurate representations of Islam, enhancing counter-terrorism strategies, and fostering international cooperation. This comprehensive approach not only enriches academic discourse but also has practical implications for policy-making and community relations.

This study employs a multidisciplinary theoretical framework, incorporating Islamic jurisprudence, international relations, and political science perspectives. It integrates analyses of classical and contemporary interpretations of Islamic law regarding violence, warfare, and terrorism. The strategic-political analysis examines the geopolitical motivations behind framing Islam as a threat and the implications for global security. Additionally, the sociopolitical impact dimension investigates how this framing affects Muslim communities and international relations, considering the rise of Islamophobia, changes in immigration and security policies, and impacts on civil liberties.

DEFINING TERRORISM: A LINGUISTIC AND TERMINOLOGICAL EXPLORATION

Before delving into the political background of associating Islam with terrorism and understanding Islam's stance on terrorism and terrorist acts, it is crucial to define and conceptualize terrorism and terrorist acts, both linguistically and terminologically. The term "terrorism" has various definitions. According to political science expert Alex P. Schmid, between 1936 and 1981 alone, approximately 109 different definitions of this phenomenon were proposed. This diversity stems from the multifaceted nature of terrorist acts, the absence of a comprehensive global definition, and the politically motivated framing of definitions. The term "terror" originates from the Latin word "terrere," meaning to frighten, scare, destroy, and kill with the intent to intimidate. This term was later adopted in French as "terreur," meaning the systematic use of violence and intimidation to dominate a force or leadership. The use of terror as a political tool can be traced back to ancient times, but it became more prominently recognized during and after the French Revolution. During this period, the revolutionary government used terror to suppress opposition and consolidate power, which is often referred

to as the "Reign of Terror." Although human history became familiar with the terms "terror" and "terrorism" immediately after the French Revolution, the international arena encountered the first violent and terrorist acts during the Byzantine rule. Jewish groups employed violence and terror tactics against the authorities as a form of resistance. Similarly, the violent and destructive acts of Hasan Sabbah's fedayeen (1035 – 1124) can also be considered early examples of modern terrorist acts. These groups used fear and violence to achieve their political and ideological goals, laying the groundwork for contemporary understandings of terrorism (Ibrahimi, 2012).

The term was first used internationally to describe the French leadership (March 13, 1793 - July 27, 1794), characterized by the exercise of violence against internal opponents. This period and leadership were labelled as a terrorist period or regime (reign of terror, régime de la terreur) (Salur, 2006, pp. 38; Çakır, 2007, pp. 34). Additionally, the term was later used during the first half of the last century for Jewish organizations in Palestine that used violent actions to exert terror on both British colonizers and Arab civilians. After the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the Palestinian Liberation Organization was also labeled with this term due to its actions often being deemed terrorist acts (Özel, 2007, pp. 15).

It is worth noting that in political literature, the words "terror" and "terrorism" are often used synonymously with violence, political violence, and anarchy. This interchangeable use complicates the effort to pin down a single, universally accepted definition. Researchers Alex P. Schmid and Jorgman, in their analysis of various definitions of terrorism, identified the main components of these definitions as violence and force, political content, fear, threat, and psychological effect. According to other classifications, the essential features of terrorism definitions include the use of violence, creating chaos and fear, and the unlawful use of violence (Salur, 2006, pp. 42; Çakır, 2007, pp. 34).

Understanding the multifaceted definitions of terrorism is crucial for analyzing its political instrumentalization. The label of terrorism has been strategically employed by state and non-state actors to delegitimize opponents and justify political agendas. This politicization of terrorism complicates the global consensus on its definition and exacerbates conflicts. For instance, acts deemed as terrorism by one group may be viewed as legitimate resistance or liberation efforts by another. This dichotomy is evident in the case of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, which some view as a terrorist organization while others see it as a legitimate resistance movement against occupation. The strategic use of the term "terrorism" also reflects broader geopolitical dynamics. Powerful states often wield the label to justify military interventions, reinforce security measures, and suppress dissent. This selective application raises questions about the objectivity and fairness of terrorism designations. Moreover, the global war on terror, initiated in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, has further entrenched these issues, leading to widespread surveillance, profiling, and human rights abuses. The association of Islam with terrorism is a relatively recent phenomenon, gaining prominence in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. This linkage is not only erroneous but also harmful, perpetuating stereotypes and fueling Islamophobia. It is crucial to distinguish between the actions of a minority of extremists and the beliefs and practices of over a billion Muslims worldwide. The vast majority of Muslims condemn terrorism and view it as antithetical to the teachings of Islam.

Islamic jurisprudence, or *fiqh*, provides a robust framework for understanding the ethical and legal dimensions of violence and conflict. Classical Islamic scholars have extensively debated the conditions under which violence is permissible, emphasizing principles such as justice, proportionality, and the protection of non-combatants. Terrorist acts, which target civilians and seek to instil fear, unequivocally violate these principles. Prominent Islamic authorities and organizations have repeatedly condemned terrorism, asserting that it has no basis in Islam. Moreover, the politicization of the term "Islamic terrorism" obscures the complex socio-political contexts that give rise to extremism. Factors such as political repression, socio-economic deprivation, foreign occupation, and ideological indoctrination play significant roles in the radicalization process. Addressing these root causes requires a comprehensive and nuanced approach, moving beyond simplistic and reductive narratives that conflate Islam with terrorism. The term "terrorism" is fraught with definitional ambiguities and political manipulations. Its association with Islam is particularly problematic, reflecting deeper issues of prejudice and misunderstanding. A critical and analytical approach is essential for unpacking these complexities, fostering a more nuanced and accurate discourse. By distinguishing between the actions of extremists and the

beliefs of mainstream Islam, and by addressing the underlying causes of radicalization, it is possible to develop more effective and just strategies for combating terrorism and promoting global peace and security.

In the past century, various international organizations have made efforts to define terrorism on a global scale. In 1937, the League of Nations ratified the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism (Library of Congress, 2024). This decision was a reaction to the assassination of Yugoslav King Alexander and French Foreign Minister Barthou in Marseille. However, due to numerous criticisms, this decision was never implemented. Similarly, in the 1970s, the United Nations initiated several attempts to define terrorism and its motives and objectives. Despite these efforts, the UN failed to establish a definitive definition of terrorism, a problem that deepened further after the September 11 attacks (Ibrahimi, 2012; Öktem, 2004, pp. 134). In this context, it is also pertinent to consider the definition of terrorism according to the Convention of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). According to this convention, terrorism is defined as: "a violent or threatening act which, regardless of the perpetrators' motives and objectives, constitutes a criminal plan by an individual or group, aimed at instigating fear and threat against people, damaging, endangering lives, honor, freedom, security, and rights or threatening to damage the environment, public and private property, with the purpose of intimidation, appropriation, endangering some national resources or international infrastructures, or threatening the stability, territorial integrity, political unity, or sovereignty of independent states." From this, we can infer that the primary components of terrorism include the exercise of violence, intimidation, subjugation, threat, endangerment, and destruction.

It is noteworthy that the term "terrorism" has also been adopted into Arabic from French. In Arabic, the word "irhab" is used to express terrorism, encompassing meanings of terror, threat, and political violence. Additionally, in the Quran and Sunnah, the term "tarhib" is used, which means instilling fear as a preventive measure. Allah states in the Quran: "And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom Allah knows. ..." (Al-Anfal, 60). Here, the Legislator's intent is not to use terror but to instill fear in enemies through defensive strength as a preventive measure against potential attacks (Ibrahimi, 2012).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND EVOLUTION OF TERRORISM DEFINITIONS

Efforts to define terrorism have been ongoing for decades, with varying degrees of success and acceptance. The League of Nations' 1934 initiative was one of the earliest attempts at an international level to address and combat terrorism through a formalized agreement. However, the political complexities and the contentious nature of defining terrorism led to the eventual abandonment of this initiative. The United Nations' efforts in the 1970s further highlighted the difficulties in achieving a consensus on the definition of terrorism. Member states' diverse political interests and perspectives made it challenging to develop a universally accepted definition. The 9/11 attacks in 2001 exacerbated these challenges, as the global community grappled with the new dimensions and threats posed by terrorism in the modern era. The attacks underscored the need for a coherent and comprehensive definition but also revealed the deep-seated disagreements and political considerations that hindered this process. The OIC's definition of terrorism provides an important perspective, particularly in distinguishing legitimate defensive measures from acts of terror. Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) emphasizes justice, proportionality, and the protection of non-combatants. The OIC's definition aligns with these principles, categorizing terrorism as criminal acts that instill fear and threaten the safety and stability of societies. The Quranic verse from Surah Al-Anfal emphasizes the concept of deterrence rather than indiscriminate violence. The use of force is framed within the context of defense and the prevention of aggression. This perspective is crucial in understanding the ethical and legal dimensions of violence within Islam, which strictly prohibits targeting innocent civilians and promotes the protection of life and property. The challenge of defining terrorism lies in its multifaceted nature and the political contexts that shape its interpretation. International efforts, though fraught with difficulties, highlight the necessity of a collective approach to address and combat terrorism effectively. The Islamic perspective, as articulated by the OIC and classical jurisprudence, offers a valuable framework that distinguishes between legitimate defense and criminal acts of terror. A nuanced understanding of terrorism requires acknowledging the complexities and the socio-political contexts in which it occurs. By fostering a critical and analytical discourse, it is possible to move beyond

simplistic narratives and develop more effective strategies for prevention and counter-terrorism. This approach not only enhances global security but also promotes justice and the protection of human rights. Terrorism, as an act with significant implications and reflections on political, strategic, social, and economic developments at the international, regional, and local levels, is characterized by specific aims. The objectives of terrorism and terrorist acts, depending on their nature, are varied and diverse. These objectives can be outlined as follows:

Instilling Fear and Panic in Society: One of the primary goals of terrorism is to create a climate of fear and panic among the population. This widespread fear can paralyze communities and disrupt daily life, leading to long-term psychological effects on the populace.

Propagating the Terrorist Group and Its Acts: Terrorist acts are often designed to draw attention to the terrorist group, raising its profile and disseminating its ideological message. This form of propaganda can attract new recruits and sympathizers to the group's cause.

Influencing Government or Institutional Decision-Making: By using violence and hostage-taking, terrorists aim to coerce governments or specific institutions into making decisions that align with the terrorists' objectives. This coercion can lead to changes in policies or actions that would otherwise not be considered.

Weakening the Political and Social Systems of a Country: Terrorist acts aim to undermine the stability of a nation's political and social structures. By creating chaos and disorder, terrorists seek to weaken the government's ability to maintain order and governance.

A Sense of Revenge: Terrorist acts are often driven by a desire for revenge against perceived injustices or grievances. This motivation can fuel a cycle of violence, where each act of terrorism prompts further retaliation.

Subjugating a State or Society to the Terrorist Group's Demands: Through intimidation and fear, terrorists aim to force a state or society to submit to their demands. This subjugation can lead to concessions or policy changes that would otherwise be unacceptable.

Creating a New Political Environment Favorable to the Terrorist Group: Terrorists seek to establish a political climate that aligns with their goals. This may involve overthrowing existing governments or creating conditions that facilitate their rise to power.

Creating Chaos, Anarchy, and a Terrorist Environment: By fostering an atmosphere of chaos and anarchy, terrorists aim to destabilize and fragment a specific state. This environment of terror can lead to the disintegration and destruction of the state's societal and governmental structures (Çakır, 2007, pp. 36, 37; Özarslan, 2001, pp. 370, 371).

From the above points, we can conclude that the phenomenon of terrorism and terrorist acts is characterized by destructive and devastating objectives for both society and the state. The deliberate creation of fear, the undermining of political and social stability, and the pursuit of revenge all serve to destabilize and fragment societies, making terrorism a significant threat to global security and stability. The destructive nature of terrorist objectives has far-reaching implications. By creating an environment of fear and instability, terrorism can have a profound impact on economic activities, social cohesion, and political stability. Businesses may close, investments may decline, and tourism may suffer due to the pervasive sense of insecurity. Social trust and cohesion can erode as communities become more insular and suspicious of outsiders. Politically, the pressure exerted by terrorist activities can lead to changes in governance and policy-making. Governments may adopt more stringent security measures, sometimes at the expense of civil liberties and human rights. This can create a cycle of repression and resistance, further fueling the conditions that give rise to terrorism.

Moreover, the international community's response to terrorism can lead to significant geopolitical shifts. Alliances may be formed or strengthened based on shared interests in combating terrorism, while divisions may arise over differing approaches and priorities. The global war on terror, for instance, has reshaped international relations and has had lasting effects on global politics. The objectives of terrorism reveal the complex and multifaceted nature of this phenomenon. By understanding the varied aims of terrorist acts, we can better comprehend the broader implications for society, the state, and the international community. A comprehensive approach to combating terrorism must address not only the immediate threat but also the underlying conditions

that foster terrorism. This involves a combination of security measures, political strategies, and social initiatives aimed at preventing radicalization, addressing grievances, and promoting stability and development. By adopting a holistic approach, we can mitigate the impact of terrorism and work towards a more secure and just world.

THE STRATEGIC-POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF LABELING AND IDENTIFYING ISLAM WITH TERRORISM

With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the bipolar system, the United States emerged as the sole superpower without a significant rival on the international stage. In this unfavourable context for American foreign policy, the U.S. faced the need to "create a new enemy" to reinforce its position and hegemony in the international arena. During this period, American intellectuals began academic activities aimed at preparing the international stage for the reception of new policies and strategies crafted by American foreign policy. According to the American professor Leo Strauss, one of the most prominent figures of the neo-conservative movement, the United States needed to find an enemy; if one could not be found, a new enemy should be created to maintain American hegemony in the world (Şahin, 2006, pp. 82-85; Tangülü, 2006, pp. 104-105). Additionally, the renowned American thinker and theorist Samuel Huntington, in his work "The Clash of Civilizations," emphasized the need to create a new enemy of Western civilization to strengthen the unity of this civilization. In this context, it is essential to mention influential American diplomats and strategists like Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski, who significantly contributed to shaping American policies towards the Islamic world in the 1990s (Oran, 2002, pp. 246). Under these circumstances, American public opinion began debating the ideal image of the new enemy, which, according to policymakers and strategists, had to differ culturally and ideologically and be capable of challenging American security. The new enemy, created by the American policy-making elite, was labeled as terrorism or radical Islam. With the 9/11 attacks, "Islamic terrorism" or "radical Islam" solidified its position on the list of the most dangerous enemies of American strategic interests (Haytoğlu, 2007, pp. 36; Çakıcıoğlu, 2007). In this new context for the international arena, Osama Bin Laden, who had been an American ally in the Afghan struggle against the Soviets, became the most sworn enemy in American political history (Yilmazer, 2006).

The 9/11 terrorist attacks created an ideal ground for implementing the theories of American scientists and strategists, who with their theories have significantly contributed to reinforcing the American position in the Islamic world and globally. Immediately after the attacks, President George W. Bush began implementing his doctrine, known as the Bush Doctrine, declaring: "We will destroy global terrorism by using all our capabilities in the fields of finance, intelligence, and military-legal sanctions. We will eliminate terrorists by destroying their financial sources. We will pursue them and the states that provide assistance to them. At the same time, every state in the world must decide whether to stand with us or with the terrorists in our war against global terrorism" (Ari, 2003, pp. 267).

In another speech, President Bush declared that the American war post-9/11 is a civilizational war or a crusade. Although the American administration later attempted to present the new American war as a war against global terrorism, fearing the negative implications of these words, the international public opinion, especially in the Islamic world, continues to believe that behind the American war against terrorism (as in the case of the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq), there are primarily civilizational and cultural, as well as strategic-political and economic, aims and interests (Ari, 2003, pp. 268; Şahin, 2006, pp. 42).

The strategic-political framing of Islam as synonymous with terrorism has profound implications. It serves not only to justify military interventions but also to shape public perceptions and policies. This framing has led to the stigmatization of Muslims globally, increased Islamophobia, and the erosion of civil liberties in the name of national security. The narrative of a civilizational clash propagated by theorists like Huntington has contributed to a polarized world view, where the West is seen as inherently opposed to the Islamic world. This binary perspective simplifies complex geopolitical realities and ignores the diverse and peaceful nature of the majority of the Muslim population. The Bush Doctrine, emphasizing pre-emptive strikes and unilateral actions, marked a significant shift in American foreign policy. It justified extensive military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, which have had lasting impacts on regional stability and global perceptions of the United States. The portrayal

of these interventions as part of a broader war on terrorism has been criticized for masking underlying political and economic motives, such as control over strategic resources and influence in the Middle East. Moreover, the identification of Islam with terrorism has hindered effective counter-terrorism efforts. It has alienated Muslim communities, who are essential partners in combating radicalization and extremism. By focusing on an ideological enemy, rather than addressing the root causes of terrorism, such as political repression, socio-economic inequalities, and foreign interventions, the international community risks perpetuating a cycle of violence and instability.

ISLAM'S STANCE ON TERRORISM

An analysis of the word "Islam" reveals that, among other meanings, it signifies peace and security. Islam, as a religion of peace, opposes killings and disorder in the world and commands the spread of tolerance, justice, and fair judgment. This is best confirmed by the verses where Allah says: "...Whenever they kindle the fire of war, Allah puts it out. And they strive to spread corruption in the land. And Allah does not like corruptors." (Quran, Al-Ma'idah; 64)

"Do not take a 'human' life—made sacred by Allah—except with 'legal' right. If anyone is killed unjustly, We have given their heirs the authority, but do not let them exceed limits in retaliation,³ for they are already supported 'by law'.." (Quran, Al-Isra; 33)

"That is why We ordained for the Children of Israel that whoever takes a life—unless as a punishment for murder or mischief in the land—it will be as if they killed all of humanity; and whoever saves a life, it will be as if they saved all of humanity.¹ 'Although' Our messengers already came to them with clear proofs, many of them still transgressed afterwards through the land." (Quran, Al-Ma'idah; 32)

"O believers! Stand firm for Allah and bear true testimony. Do not let the hatred of a people lead you to injustice. Be just! That is closer to righteousness. And be mindful of Allah. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do." (Quran, Al-Ma'idah; 8)

"Indeed, Allah commands you to return trusts to their rightful owners;¹ and when you judge between people, judge with fairness. What a noble commandment from Allah to you! Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.." (Quran, An-Nisa; 58)

The Prophet Muhammad also exemplified tolerance and justice even towards his enemies, who subjected him to various tortures and attempted to kill him. The Quran highlights his gentleness and mercy: "It is out of Allah's mercy that you 'O Prophet' have been lenient with them. Had you been cruel or hard-hearted, they would have certainly abandoned you. So pardon them, ask Allah's forgiveness for them, and consult with them in 'conducting' matters. Once you make a decision, put your trust in Allah. Surely Allah loves those who trust in Him." (Quran, Al-Imran; 159)

Islam opposes disorder, tyranny, and terrorism. Peace is an essential and fundamental aspect of Islam, while war is defined as a secondary and unnatural issue. War in Islam is permitted only in specific cases and under extraordinary circumstances. It can be undertaken for self-defense against enemy attacks or to prevent the chaos that leads to war, anarchy, and tyranny. Islam is considered the first system in human history to establish certain principles and rules that must be implemented during the conduct of war. These include mercy towards the enemy, prohibition of torture, respect for the dead among the enemy ranks, prohibition of attacks on civilians, and engagement in war only when no other options are available (Çapan, 2005, pp. 29-40, 102-103; İldeş, 2008; Kuyucu, 2007). The ethical and legal framework of Islam regarding violence and warfare is deeply rooted in the principles of justice, proportionality, and the protection of non-combatants. Islamic teachings emphasize that any act of violence must be justified, proportionate, and aimed at restoring peace and justice. This is reflected in the various Quranic verses and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which collectively form a comprehensive code of conduct for Muslims.

One of the fundamental principles in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) is the prohibition of harming innocent lives. This principle underscores the sanctity of life and the importance of protecting civilians during conflicts. The Quran explicitly prohibits the killing of innocent people and condemns acts of violence that spread corruption

and disorder in society. This prohibition is not only a moral directive but also a legal mandate that must be upheld by all Muslims. The concept of jihad in Islam, often misunderstood and misrepresented, is primarily about striving for justice and righteousness. The greater jihad (jihad al-akbar) refers to the internal struggle against one's own sins and weaknesses, while the lesser jihad (jihad al-asghar) refers to the external struggle against oppression and tyranny. The latter is strictly regulated and can only be declared under specific conditions, with the aim of protecting the oppressed and restoring justice. Analyzing the meaning of the word "Islam" reveals that, among other meanings, it signifies peace and security. Islam, as a religion of peace, opposes killings and disorder in the world and commands the spread of tolerance, justice, and fair judgment. This is best confirmed by the verses where Allah says:

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THE DEBATE AMONG ISLAMIC SCHOLARS ON TERRORISM

The question of how terrorism should be conceptualized has sparked deep debates among Islamic scholars. This relatively new form of violence, which is not addressed in classical Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), is variously referred to as el-harabe (disorder and disruption of public order) or el-baghi (rebellion). Both terms have specific legal implications and prescribed sanctions (hudud) within Islamic law. A group of Islamic jurists argues that the characteristics of the criminal act of terrorism align with those of el-harabe and that the prescribed punishments include execution, crucifixion, amputation of limbs from opposite sides of the body, and exile. The Islamic judge (qadi) chooses one of these punishments based on the nature of the crime committed during the public disorder or disruption (el-harabe). In Islamic law, el-harabe is defined as a violent activity that publicly

manifests force, endangers or takes another's property, violates another's freedom, or spreads widespread fear, distress, and panic among the population (Sabik, 1992; Zuhayli, 1992; Ersoy, 2007). However, opponents of this view emphasize the discrepancies between the criminal acts of terrorism and el-harabe, presenting the following arguments and critiques:

Terrorism is a broader term than el-harabe. Unlike el-harabe, terrorism is characterized by political and ideological objectives.

Terrorism has an international character, often impacting uninvolved factors, whereas el-harabe is local.

The primary target of terrorism is the state and its institutions, but its acts also affect innocent civilians. In contrast, el-harabe primarily targets civilians and specific societal groups, with the state and its institutions being indirectly affected.

The violence exercised through terrorism is more comprehensive and general compared to el-harabe. Terrorism has transcended physical violence to include technological, economic, and ecological terrorism (Özel, 2007, pp. 22).

Another group of Islamic jurists believes that the criminal act of terrorism aligns with el-baghi (rebellion) and that the prescribed sanction for rebellion should be implemented, which involves fighting the rebels until they comply with the rules of Allah. However, this view is also not immune to objections and criticisms. Opponents distinguish between terrorism and el-baghi, emphasizing that terrorism, unlike rebellion—which aims to show civil disobedience by fighting the legal system with arms—has impacts not only on the political system of a state but also on society (Özel, 2007, pp. 23). While terrorism often shares components and elements with some criminal acts for which Islamic law prescribes specific sanctions, the existence of crucial differences necessitates intensified intellectual efforts by Islamic scholars to define and elaborate on this issue professionally and in detail. The ongoing debate among Islamic scholars highlights the complexity of defining terrorism within the framework of Islamic jurisprudence. The primary challenge lies in balancing traditional legal principles with the contemporary realities of global terrorism. Scholars must navigate the nuances of historical interpretations while addressing modern forms of violence that have evolved beyond the scope of classical fiqh. The divergent views on whether terrorism aligns more closely with el-harabe or el-baghi reflect the broader challenge of integrating new phenomena into established legal frameworks. This integration requires a comprehensive understanding of both the traditional principles and the contemporary contexts in which terrorism operates. By engaging in rigorous intellectual efforts, scholars can develop definitions and legal responses that are both rooted in Islamic tradition and relevant to the current global landscape.

CONCLUSIONS WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

The difficulty in defining terrorism stems from its varied interpretations and political underpinnings. The absence of a universally accepted definition complicates global efforts to effectively address and combat terrorism. Islamic jurisprudence offers multiple interpretations, comparing terrorism to classical concepts such as el-harabe (disorder) and el-baghi (rebellion), each with specific legal ramifications. Islam, as a religion of peace, fundamentally rejects terrorism, emphasizing justice, the sanctity of life, and the promotion of tolerance and mercy. The Quran and Hadith unequivocally denounce acts of indiscriminate violence and the targeting of innocents. These teachings align with universal principles of human rights, underscoring Islam's commitment to peace and justice. The strategic framing of Islam as synonymous with terrorism has significant geopolitical consequences. This narrative has been used to justify military interventions and influence public perceptions, often leading to increased Islamophobia and the erosion of civil liberties. The Bush Doctrine post-9/11 illustrates this approach, reinforcing the notion of a civilizational clash between the West and the Islamic world. Islamic scholars face the challenge of integrating modern forms of terrorism into classical legal frameworks. The ongoing debates among scholars highlight the need for a nuanced understanding that respects traditional Islamic principles while addressing contemporary forms of violence. These efforts are crucial for developing comprehensive and contextually relevant legal frameworks.

The misrepresentation of Islam as inherently linked to terrorism undermines global security efforts. Effective counter-terrorism strategies require the active cooperation of Muslim communities and a focus on addressing

the root causes of terrorism, such as political repression, socio-economic inequalities, and foreign interventions. To address these issues, international bodies, including the United Nations, should prioritize the development of a universally accepted definition of terrorism. This definition should be comprehensive, encompassing the various forms and motivations behind terrorism, and provide a clear framework for global counter-terrorism efforts. Governments, media, and educational institutions have a crucial role in dispelling myths and stereotypes that associate Islam with terrorism. By promoting accurate representations of Islamic teachings and the peaceful majority of Muslims, these institutions can help reduce Islamophobia and foster mutual understanding and respect.

Effective counter-terrorism strategies must involve active engagement with Muslim communities. This includes supporting community-led initiatives to counter radicalization, providing platforms for moderate voices, and addressing legitimate grievances that may lead to extremism. Collaborative efforts can help build trust and ensure that counter-terrorism measures are effective and just. Islamic scholars should continue their intellectual endeavors to integrate modern forms of terrorism into classical jurisprudence. This involves developing detailed and contextually relevant legal frameworks that address contemporary forms of violence while upholding the ethical and legal standards of Islam. Such efforts are essential for providing clear guidance and countering extremist narratives. Furthermore, international cooperation and multilateralism should be prioritized over unilateral actions. Building a global consensus on the definition and response to terrorism can enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of counter-terrorism measures. Upholding human rights and the rule of law is crucial to ensuring that security measures do not undermine the values they aim to protect. In conclusion, the strategic-political framing of Islam with terrorism has profound implications for international relations, security policies, and global perceptions. A balanced and inclusive approach is essential for addressing the root causes of terrorism, fostering global stability, and promoting a more just and peaceful world. By engaging in comprehensive dialogue, education, and community building, it is possible to counteract false narratives and develop effective strategies for combating terrorism. This approach not only reinforces Islam's true message of peace and justice but also contributes to a more secure and harmonious global community.

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