



## Islam, Violence and War

All should live in peace, justice and brotherhood – therefore peace is always preferred. Forgiveness and reconciliation is rewarded by Allah, so war is best avoided. Muslims will always attempt diplomatic and peaceful means to resolve conflict first.

The concept of Jihad sometimes permits Muslims to fight. The aim of Jihad is to maintain justice and Islam as a religion. The Lesser Jihad is physically fighting. This is a last resort and there are specific rules that have to be followed. The Lesser Jihad should only be used in defence; it should be the last resort, be led by a spiritual or religious leader that all Muslims accept, and civilians, crops and animals should be protected. War should not be fought for greed or ambition or to capture other lands. Also, a war should not be started without first being attacked for no reason.

Most Muslims believe that war can be permitted if certain conditions are followed and certain rules are kept to. The Lesser Jihad should only be used in defence; it should be the last resort, be led by a spiritual or religious leader that all Muslims accept, and civilians, crops and animals should be protected. War should not be fought for greed or ambition or to capture other lands. Also, a war should not be started without first being attacked for no reason.

In the Quran, there are very clear rules for using violence in war. These rules include not harming trees or crops, a religious place of worship, women, children or men that are not fighting you, and not killing innocent people. Animals should only be killed for food (eg: not for revenge or to deny others food or livelihood) and dead bodies must not be mutilated.

**100 AD, Judaea (Middle East) The Sicarii**  
A Jewish group of assassins. They murdered enemies and collaborators in a campaign to end Roman Rule, often using small daggers called *sicae* hidden in their cloaks. They would stab people in busy crowds and then disappear!

**1860s-1960s, USA**  
**The KKK**  
A White (Christian) terrorist group targeting non-whites - famous for lynchings.

**1605, London** **Guy Fawkes & Co.**  
The Catholic Plotters of aiming to blow up the Houses of Parliament and the king, James I

**1000-1200 AD, Syria**  
**The Hashhashin**  
A secretive Islamic sect active in Iran and Syria from the 11th to the 13th century.

**1793, France**  
**Maximilien Robespierre**  
Following the French revolution he had enemies of the government brutally killed before creating a dictatorship.

## Christianity, Violence and War

Christians believe that they should follow the example of Jesus; and show compassion, kindness and forgiveness to those who wrong them. Also, Jesus told his followers to be "peacemakers". Even when facing death, Jesus told his followers not to look for revenge. Christians are expected to stand up for fairness, justice and equality. There are certain situations, though, when some people have to die in order for more people to be protected. This is where the idea of Just (or 'fair') War comes from. A Just War is a war that is fought to protect innocent people, declared as a very last resort, and supported by the government. Basically, it is a war to restore justice.

1. **A war must be declared by a lawful authority.** A war can only be declared by a government, a ruler, or the UN.
2. **A war must only be fought to bring about good.** This means a war can only be fought to restore peace, to prevent suffering or prevent murder of innocent people. The war must stop once this has happened.
3. **War must be a last resort.** All other ways of resolving the conflict must have been tried.
4. **There must be a good chance of success.** This means no country should go to war if they do not have a chance of winning.
5. **Only necessary force can be used.** This means that you cannot use massive nuclear weapons against a tiny country, or poisoned gas against civilians.
6. **Only legitimate targets can be attacked.** An example would be a military base or a weapons factory. Hospitals, homes and civilians should never be attacked

## Key Terms

- Extremism  
Extreme or anti-social ideas
- Terrorism  
Inflicting fear, panic and terror
- Radicalise  
Process by which a person is turned into an extremist/terrorist
- EDL  
White British extremist group
- Jihad  
Struggle
- Greater Jihad  
Struggle to be the best Muslim possible
- Lesser Jihad  
Physically fighting to protect religion
- Alienation  
Feeling excluded
- Vulnerability  
Being in a position of weakness
- Taliban  
Extremist Islamic group
- ISIS  
Terrorist group - Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
- DAESH  
Another name for ISIS