



Islamic Theology of Counter Terrorism  
اسلام کے تقابلیاتی اور کانٹریٹوریوٹازم

# The Concept of Islamist Terrorism

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## DEFINING TERRORISM

- UK definition of terrorism
- German definition of terrorism:
- Pakistani definition of terrorism
- Israeli definition of terrorism

## DEFINING ISLAMIST TERRORISM

- Political Islam
- Violent Jihad
- Radical Ideology
- Takfir

Terrorism is itself a crime and it should be dealt with as a crime, however in some countries it has been dealt with differently. For example, the root cause of terrorism is extremism but some states kept a soft corner for extremist organisations and tried to be harsher towards terrorist organizations and therefore, terrorism is going to be out of control because the root causes are still there and are growing fast. The definition of terrorism and Islamist terrorism are two different concepts but are very much connected. We can also say that Islamist terrorism is a different form of terrorism or comes under the definition of terrorism generally.

In general terrorism you find the types religious, right wing, left wing and ethno-nationalist terrorism, however Islamist terrorism comes under the category of religious terrorism. There are different types of religious terrorism including Islamic, Christian, Jewish, Hindu and Buddhist terrorism but the religious form of terrorism that damaged the peace and generated fear and chaos across the world is the Islamist terrorism.

Before we define Islamist terrorism, we must define general terrorism by analysing the differences of terrorism definitions. We cannot understand the concept of Islamist terrorism if we do not define general terrorism, its definitions and differences in different reasons, respectively.

## DEFINING TERRORISM

Terrorism is indeed the world's most prevalent phenomenon today and there seems to be no escaping from it, at least in the near future. Terrorism has around 109 definitions currently applied in the world and each definition contradicts each other. This is why the tool of countering terrorism is not effective in the world. Therefore, the menace of terrorism is out of control because every state deal with terrorism differently. For example, I mention here three comprehensive definitions of terrorism which clearly define the western concept of terrorism.

The US definition of terrorism:

“Terrorism is the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear, intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological.”<sup>1</sup>

UK definition of terrorism:

“Terrorism is the use of threat, for the purpose advancing a political, religious or ideological course of action, of serious violence against any person or property”.<sup>2</sup>

German definition of terrorism:

“Terrorism is the enduringly conducted struggle for political goals which are intended to be achieved by means of assaults on the life and property of other persons, especially by means of sever crime.”<sup>3</sup>

One common and simple definition of terrorism for ordinary public to understand is that the terrorism is an act of violence in order to achieve political goals. But, defining the comprehensive definition of terrorism is hard to adopt because of the different theories or concepts of defining terrorism. There we

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<sup>1</sup> Weinberg, op. cit, pp, 4-5

<sup>2</sup> Abid

<sup>3</sup> Abid, pp, 6-7

find the scholarly definition of terrorism also abound. For example, counter terrorism pundits define terrorism differently. Bruce Hoffman's definition of terrorism is different than Alex P. Schmid's and his definition is different than Boaz Ganor's. Therefore, no academic or governmental attempt so far to define the terrorism has achieved international consensus.

The countries in the western world have adopted different definitions of terrorism than the countries in Asia or in the Middle East because the usage of terrorism and the tools that terrorists use are slightly different than that used by the western world. For example:

Pakistani definition of terrorism:

“A person is said to commit a terrorist act if he, in order to, or if the effect of his actions will be to, strike terror or create a sense of fear and insecurity in the people, or any section of the people, does any act or thing by using bombs, dynamite or other explosive or inflammable substances, or such fire-arms or other lethal weapons as may be notified, or poisons or noxious gases or chemicals, in such a manner as to cause, or be likely to cause, the death of, or injury to, any person or persons, or damage to, or destruction of, property on a large scale, or a widespread disruption of supplies of services essential to the life of the community, or threatens with the use of force public servants in order to prevent them from discharging their lawful duties.”<sup>4</sup>

Israeli definition of terrorism:

“The Law defines a “terrorist action” as an action that is driven by a political, religious, or ideological motive and is carried out with the goal of instilling in the public fear or anxiety, or of forcing the Israeli government or another governmental agency, including an agency of a foreign country, or an international organization to do or refrain from doing an act involves an actual act or a real threat to inflict severe harm on one of the following: a person's body or liberty; public security or health; property, where the circumstances involved entail an intention or a real possibility to inflict severe harm on individuals or public safety and liberty; religious sites, burial places, and religious paraphernalia or infrastructure, public systems or essential services, or the state economy or environment.”<sup>5</sup>

Syria has also adapted the definition of terrorism although it is considered a terror sponsor state in the category of “State Sponsored Terrorism” by the international laws.

“After the United States attack on Abu Kamal, the Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem defined terrorism as "Killing civilians in international law means a terrorist aggression.”<sup>6</sup>

We see the differences of the definitions of terrorism between the Western world and Pakistan and Israel because of the nature of the terrorism in those regions. Pakistan included the clause of chemical terrorism, however Israel included environmental and economic terrorism etc. This was my whole point to define the concept of different definitions of terrorism which completely depend on the terrorism atmosphere of the country and regions. There have been written hundreds of books and thousands of articles on how to define terrorism.

## DEFINING ISLAMIST TERRORISM

Islamist terrorism is the form of terrorism that comes under the category of religious terrorism. Some people consider Islamist terrorism to be related with the principles of Islam and the mediaeval teachings of Islamic theology but most of the Islamic scholars have refuted this claim. Islam indeed denounces terrorism and extremism in religion.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/document/actsandordinences/anti\\_terrorism.htm](http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/document/actsandordinences/anti_terrorism.htm)

<sup>5</sup> [http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20\\_lsr\\_343902.pdf](http://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/law/20_lsr_343902.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/7693583.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/7693583.stm)



What is Islamist terrorism? The definition of Islamist terrorism is not different from the basic and common definition of terrorism, generally. The simple definition of Islamist terrorism is: “A violent act that is committed in the name Islam by using the Islamic texts to achieve a political goal.”

Muslims across the world think that the terminology of Islamist terrorism has been used wrongly in relations to defame the name of Islam which is not correct because the terminology of Islamist terrorism is being used by Islamists. Islamists used religious texts from Quran and hadith to justify their violent acts against a specific religion, community or country. Islamists always manipulated Islamic texts and used them to commit acts of terrorism in the name of Islam in relations to achieve political ends and due to their bloodied actions, the world started using the terminology of Islamist terrorist. A common man sees Muslims using Islam to slit people’s throats - such as the Taliban and ISIS did and the world is witness to their barbaric and ruthless actions.

According to my opinion, indeed, terrorism has nothing to do with Islam but Islamist terrorism has something to do with terrorism. When people commit an act of violence with intention to hurt someone or damage something in the name of Islam, the act of terrorism would automatically be related with Islam. Whether the act is committed by the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram, Al-Shabab or LeT, Islamic terrorists use the name of Islam to justify their actions.

Most Muslims consider Islamic terrorists as non-Muslim or that they have nothing to do with Islam. I personally reject their baseless claim that they are not Muslims and that they have nothing to do with Islam. Indeed, they are Muslims, they follow the teachings of Islam, they pray regularly, they fast, they read Quran and hadith, they grow beards or wear veil on their faces; they are Muslims yet do not follow the peaceful teachings of Islam but instead that of political Islam.

There are five pillars in Islam.

- 1- Creed
- 2- Prayer
- 3- Fasting
- 4- Charity
- 5- Pilgrimage

To follow these five pillars is obligatory upon every Muslim but in Political Islam, Islamists do follow these basic pillars of Islam but they strongly follow their own political Islamic pillars which differ from peaceful Islamic pillars.

There are three pillars of Political Islam.

- 1- Radical Ideology
- 2- Violent Jihad
- 3- Takfir (excommunication)

Before defining these political Islamic pillars, we need to know what political Islam is. Political Islam is when Muslims politicalise their religion by using violent acts in the name of Islam to achieve political ends. That is political Islam.

According to Shahram Akbarsadeh:

“Political Islam is a modern phenomenon that seeks to use religion to shape the political system.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Political Islam edited by Shahram Akbarsadeh, pp 1

Political Islam is based on two dimensions of ideology.

- 1- Political
- 2- Religious

Political Ideology is influenced by Lenin-Marx mixture socialism and religious ideology is adapted from Qutb and Maududi. The followers of political Islam have targeted two distinct bodies for their political agitation. As Henry Munson points out to understand the appeal of Islamism one must look at both nationalistic resentment of foreign domination and the direct economic situation in much of the Islamic world.<sup>8</sup>

Islamist terrorism is born of political Islam and continued by its followers, Islamists. Islamic teachings denounce these activities. While terrorism, even in the form of suicide attacks, is not an Islamic phenomenon by definition, it cannot be ignored that the lion's share of terrorist acts and the most devastating of them in recent years have been perpetrated in the name of Islam. This fact has sparked a fundamental debate both in the West and within the Muslim world regarding the link between these acts and the teachings of Islam. Most Western analysts are hesitant to identify such acts with the teachings of one of the world's great religions. Western political leaders such as George Bush and Tony Blair have already described that the war against terrorism has nothing to do with Islam. It is war against evil that is political Islam.

The modern International Islamist terrorism is a natural offshoot of twentieth century Islamic fundamentalism. The modern form of Kharijites overruled the world and hijacked the peaceful image of Islam. The founders of modern Kharijites movements in the Middle East and in south Asia are Sayyid Qutb and Maulana Maududi. These figures triggered political Islam to achieve political goals on the basis of socialism disguised under the cloak of Islam.

The ideology of Modern Kharijites is influenced by Lenin-Marxist revolution while the medieval Islam has rejected such philosophies. Shmuel Bar, a senior research fellow at Interdisciplinary Centre Herzliya said this in his report:

“Such a philosophy attributing centrality to the duty of jihad is not an innovation of modern radical Islam. The seventh-century Kharijite sect, infamous in Islamic history as a cause of Muslim civil war, took this position and implemented it. But the Kharijite doctrine was rejected as a heresy by medieval Islam. The novelty is the tacit acceptance by mainstream Islam of the basic building blocks of this “neo-Kharijite” school.”<sup>9</sup>

I am missing one famous personality of political Islam of the twentieth century who has successfully achieved his goal to overthrow an existing government, and that is Ayatollah Khamenei of Iran. Sayyid Qutb and Maulana Maududi did not achieve such a political goal that Ayatollah Khamenei did. He not only overthrew the kingdom of Iran but implemented political Islam in Iran. He then started a war with Iraq in to expand his political Islamic doctrine in other countries. Iran has great political influence in the Middle East where it supported, financed and trained Islamic militants to create chaos and try to overthrow Arab regimes and to create governments based on the Khamenei model.

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<sup>8</sup> Munson, 2003, 51

<sup>9</sup> The religious sources of Islamist terrorism by Shmuel Bar, 2004



There are two ways in political Islam to gain its power in the world and those are: a revolutionary styled coup and act(s) of terrorism. So far, four Islamist organisations have achieved their goals to gain power in their constituencies.

Iranian Revolutionary Guards in Iran

Hamas in Gaza

Hezbollah in Lebanon

Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan ul Muslimoon) in Egypt tried very hard to bring Lenin type revolution in Egypt by killing its president Anwar Sadat in a rally but the intense response from Egyptian security forces in relations to raids, arrests and execution of MB's supporters weakened the revolutionary struggle. Therefore, they started terrorist tactics all around the world to gain political goals.

## IDEOLOGY

The ideology of Islamists is related with the religion of Islam, the political Islam. Islamists use and misuse the Quranic verses and other religious texts in regards to achieving political ends such as overthrowing elected governments or Muslim kingdoms and using terror tactics to destabilise democratic system of those countries.

Their ideology is pretty much related with Kharijites ideology. The Kharijites is a recognised term in Islamic history for extremists and Jihadists. The modern-day Jihadist revolutionary groups are collectively known amongst early and later day Muslim scholars as the Kharijites. Another term that has been used for them by the scholars and jurists is Takfiris. The term takfiris here refers to those who go to extremes in declaring Muslims 'apostates'

The ideology of takfiris/Kharijites can be understood as the philosophy that enables Muslims to become involved in extremist Islamist terrorism; a supremacist, takfirist ideology that seeks to impose a global Caliphate and holds that its goals can be achieved by means of terrorism.<sup>10</sup>

One of the slogans they use, is "We love death as you love life". They love death means they spread death around the world but Islam promotes life and denounces death and suicide. They believe in bloodshed and violence which they sometimes turn into actions of rebellion and these actions are not recognised by the teachings of Islam. Islamic terrorists always want to be Shaheed (Martyr) through killing people of other religions. They want media and public attention in regards to publicise their bloodied actions. Their words are nothing until they give them life with their blood. One of the British terrorists of 7/7 bombing, Mohammad Siddique Khan recorded a video before carrying out the suicide mission in which he stated that "Our words are dead until we give them life with our blood".<sup>11</sup>

They declare any Muslim who does not agree with them or with their ideology a kafir or murtad (apostate) and that their blood is permissible to shed. One of the prominent figureheads of Ikhwanis (Muslims Brotherhood) said in his articles about Sayyid Qutb's ideology:

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<sup>10</sup> Britain's Suburban Terrorists, Introduction, pp. 8-9

<sup>11</sup> Abid, pp. 15

“The text is clear, and completely apparent: The writer (Qutb) does not consider [anyone] to be a Muslim except whoever believes in this ideology of his, and this is the group that he calls the "*Muslim Vanguard*", and this [group] is the one for which it is obligatory to realize that it alone is the "Muslim Ummah", and that whatever is around it and whoever is around it, from those who have not entered into what [this group] has entered into, is [itself] Jaahiliyyah and [those people are] the people of Jaahiliyyah, meaning they are Mushriks and Kuffar, they do not have any share of Islam, even if they pray, fast, give zakah, and make the pilgrimage.

It is as if all the Muslims are equivalent to the Mushriks of Makkah at the time of the sending of Muhammad (as a Messenger), and it is as if his da'wah is equivalent to the da'wah of Muhammad (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam), whoever believed in that da'wah entered into Islam and whoever did not believe in it, then he is a Jaahiliyy, Kaafir, whose blood is permissible to shed!!”<sup>12</sup>

This was the Qutb’s ideology that was adopted by every Islamist who considers Qutb as their ideological godfather. Islamists’ first target is those Muslims whose ideology is different than Qutb’s political Islamic ideology. The greatest Islamic scholars rejected their actions and consider them as unlawful and un-Islamic; they also call them ‘dogs of hell’. The great scholar of Islam Ibn Taymiyah (RA) once called them ‘dogs of hellfire’.

“As for those who make Takfir by way of sins and permit revolt against the rulers then if they revolt against the rulers, they are Kharijites and Terrorists (Irhaabiyyoon), and from the Dogs of Hellfire.”<sup>13</sup>

Islamists always misused and manipulated the Islamic texts (Quran and Hadith) and they not only propagate those texts but also try to enforce them on other Muslims in regards to fulfill their thrust for blood.

For example:

When reading through the Quran or Hadith (saying of the Prophet of Islam PBUH), one must understand the context in which the wording applies. The following verse of the Quran is a favourite amongst those who are interested in manipulating the message of Quran.

“And kill them whenever you find them and expel them from where they expelled you, as persecuting people to sway the, from God’s Religion is worse than killing. But do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque, unless they fight you there. But if they do fight you, then slay them; This is the recompense of the disbelievers.”<sup>14</sup>

On occasion, this verse has been dangerously trimmed down to the following:

“And Kill them whenever you find them....”<sup>15</sup>

The obvious question is, “Kill who?”. To answer this question, one should read the verse before and after 2:191.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.takfiris.com/takfir/assets/images/qaradawi-qutb-takfir-article.gif>

<sup>13</sup> (The Ruling on Those who Make Takfir by Way of Sin and Permit Revolting Against the Rulers), fatwa no 3407

<sup>14</sup> Quran 2:191

<sup>15</sup> Abid

“And fight in the way of Allah those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits, surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits.”<sup>16</sup>

The above verse mentions fighting as a means of self-defence (i.e. with those who fight with you). The verse after 2:191 is:

“But if they cease, Allah is oft-forgiving Most Merciful.”<sup>17</sup>

These verses were revealed at a time when Muslims had been expelled from their homes on account of their faith. They endured more than ten years of persecution and eventually had to flee to a safe land. The above verses were related to a war that would be imposed over Muslims and Muslims had to fight in self-defence. Hence, the above verse can only be applied in such circumstances.

The Islamic Jihadists manipulate these verses and apply on Non-Muslims as well as Muslims. They target those who have no knowledge of Islam or do not know the Arabic language. This example demonstrates that verse in the Quran should be understood in its proper context since verses were revealed in stages in relation to particular situation, over a period of 23 years. It is also important to note that the Quran was revealed in Arabic. Therefore, translation into different languages may be misleading and/or inaccurate. As we read in verse 2:190, Allah commands Muslims not to be on an extreme level: “Do not transgress the limits.” A situation of war is no excuse to go beyond boundaries. Islam teaches the avoidance of blind retaliation.

## Motivation

A person cannot carry out a terrorist attack if he has no motivation to do so. Motivation and capability are two different elements and without combining together, one cannot commit an act of terrorism. In a case of Islamist terrorism, the motivation is Islamic texts that motivate someone to become a terrorist.

Now the question is this, does Islam promote terrorism? Or is terrorism a monopoly of Islam? My answer is, absolutely wrong. In this case, how come someone become an Islamist by following the Islamic texts. It takes a long historical and religious discussion to understand the real facts behind the Islamic texts that change someone’s mind towards extremism.

If someone has the capability to commit terrorism but he has not got motivation, he will not be able to carry out the attack.

Islamic texts do not teach violence or terrorism but in fact people use and manipulate the verses of war and implement them on terrorism to motivate someone in order to carry out terrorist act.

For example:

There is a Quranic verse that Islamists use to frequently misguide other Muslims.

*“O’ YOU who have obtained faith! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for your allies.....”* <sup>18</sup>

*In another Quranic verse:*

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<sup>16</sup> Quran 2:190

<sup>17</sup> Quran 2:192

<sup>18</sup> Quran: 5:51



. . . Likewise, you are permitted to marry chaste believing women [Muslims] or chaste women among the people who were given the Scripture [Jews and Christians] . . . <sup>19</sup>

This is how contradictory concepts of some Muslim clerics create misunderstanding between the Jews, Christians and Muslims by issuing statements that Allah forbids friendship with them. On one hand Allah says Muslims can marry Jewish and Christian women and on other hand Allah says we cannot make friendship with them. How contradictory is that! The fact of the matter is that Allah never said this. There is no contradiction between both verses but we have lack of knowledge to understand the real face of Islam and the true teachings of the Quran. In reality, the Quran never ordered that we cannot make friendship with the people of the books.

The verse number one mentioned above is often quoted to show that Islam is intolerant.

A complete understanding can only be achieved by understanding the whole issue as presented over all the verses and chapters and not by looking at only one part of the Quran. God specifically warns us against doing just that, upholding one part of the Quran while disregarding the rest. During the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) when the Jews and Christians were in open conflict with the Muslims, there were some Muslims who were more concerned about maintaining their alliances with the Jews and Christians at the expense of the Muslim community.

The above verse is referring to such situations where Muslims with doubts in their hearts will ally themselves with the enemy. Let us look at some other verse about this issue. The following verse regulates relations with any people, regardless of faith: As for such [of the unbelievers] as do not fight against you on account of [your] faith and neither drive you forth from your homelands, God does not forbid you to show them kindness and to behave towards them with full equity: for verily, God loves those who act equitably. (Quran: 60:8)

From the above verse, we learn that we are only discouraged from befriending those who fight Muslims because of their religion. So, according to the above verses from the Quran, you can be kind to Jews and Christians, you can have them as friends and you can have a good relationship with them except those who fight with you.

Without reading and knowing the historical background of the verse, we cannot understand the concept of implementing it. Islamic extreme clerics do not teach the background of the verse but cherry pick it and enforce them on others in order to achieve their nasty goals.

There are many Quranic and Hadith texts that have been manipulated and used to brainwash youngsters. So, it is established that without religious motivations, Islamists cannot carry out terrorist acts.

## Conclusion

Political Islam has not only ruined the peaceful image of Islam but destroyed the multicultural societies of many countries. The Muslim states are the first victims of Islamist terrorism, more than any other non-Muslim state. Muslim world is still fighting against this menace but this ideology is not going to be destroyed easily.

Islamists use the tools of Islamic texts in order to make their bloodied actions permissible and they carry out these under the umbrella of political Islam which they proudly call the 'true Islam'. They have no knowledge of Islam and have no idea what Islam says about those non-Muslims with whom Muslims have a peace contract. Islam protects the blood, property and honour of the people who are under our contract.

Quran says:

*"We have sent you 'O Mohammad' not but as mercy to the mankind."* <sup>20</sup>

This message is for all Muslims living in Muslim majority countries or in non-Muslim states that we must be peaceful, compassionate and merciful towards other people regardless of their religion and race.

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<sup>19</sup> Quran: 5:05

<sup>20</sup> Quran 21:107

Muslims have been commanded by Allah and His Apostle (PBUH) to obey the ruler even if he or she is non-Muslim unless he forbids you from practicing your religion. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

*“Listen and obey even if an Abyssinian slave is out an authority over you.”*<sup>21</sup>

Muslims living in Muslim countries or in non-Muslim countries are committed under pact; their blood, wealth, property and honour is protected by non-Muslim rulers. Then where does an act of rebellion fit here? Islamists have different interpretation of Islamic texts and they see every lad as a domain of war if their rulers do not implement their type of Sharia law which is called Political Islam, the Islam they want to implement on others by force.

Muslims in western countries are commanded by Islam to be honest, decent and loyal to the country they live in and are forbidden to create mischief in those countries by carrying out an act of crime or terrorism against the state or people of the country. Muslims must be educated enough to know the difference between Islam, a peaceful religion, and the phenomenon of political Islam, which is based on violence and mischief.

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<sup>21</sup> Bukhari No: 661

# ABOUT ITCT

ITCT is UK based organisation and founded in 2018. It is a non-political and non-profitable organisation and is a unique think tank in itself. There is not a single organisation around that specifically counters the narratives of Islamic terrorism by using the tools of Islamic Theology. ITCT exposes the root causes of Political Islam and works hard to eliminate it through introducing the actual concept of Islamic Theology.

ITCT conducts a comprehensive research to find out the key elements that draw the most vulnerable people of the society into the fire of religious extremism. ITCT works on three main factors in order to educate the Muslim community:

- That Islamic Terrorism is wrongly associated with Islam
- And is committed by misguided Muslims
- By manipulating religious texts to brainwash Muslims

## ITCT has three pillars to stand on:

- **MISSION**  
Countering Islamic Terrorism
- **VISION**  
Educating Muslim Community
- **OBJECTIVE**  
Providing the Solution of Islamic Terrorism

ITCT is an independent organisation that generates funds through donations. ITCT warmly welcomes talented writers, researchers and experts and would like to publish their work.