

# Terrorism and Jihad

Analytical Study from Islamic and Security Perspective

Lt Col (Retd) A K M Maksudul Haque *PhD, PSC*



**Research Division**

**Bangladesh Institute of  
Islamic Thought (BIIT)**



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# Preface

The term “Jihad” has frequently been misinterpreted and misused in contemporary discourse, resulting in its wrongful association with acts of terrorism. This distortion has allowed opportunistic groups to exploit “Jihad” as a justification for secessionist movements, liberation struggles, resistance wars, and even personal or communal conflicts. Tragically, some individuals and groups have committed heinous acts, including the killing of innocent civilians, under the guise of Jihad—actions that are unequivocally prohibited in Islam.

Against this backdrop, Islam and its followers have often been unfairly blamed for acts of terror. Muslims in non-Muslim-majority societies have faced hatred, discrimination, and, at times, retaliatory violence. Meanwhile, the ongoing atrocities and brutalities committed by Israeli Defense Forces against Palestinians and Lebanese civilians have further exacerbated global tensions. In recent past, some global powers have invaded weaker Muslim-majority states under the pretext of combating terrorism, paradoxically leading to a broader spread of violence instead of its elimination.

At times, the teachings of Islam, a religion rooted in peace, are distorted and weaponized by opportunists, branding Islam as a religion of terrorism. In truth, Islam unequivocally prohibits forced conversions, the killing of innocents, suicide, and all forms of atrocity. The stigma associating Muslims with terrorism is therefore deeply unjustified. The Prophet Muhammad (S.), universally regarded as a role model, never perpetrated, endorsed, or condoned terrorism. Instead, he eradicated terror in the Arabian Peninsula through peaceful means, guided by the teachings of the Qur’an. His leadership established a society in which individuals were granted complete freedom to choose their faith.

This study seeks to distinguish Jihad from terrorism by exploring their fundamental differences in objectives and practices. Employing a historical methodology, this qualitative research draws primarily on the Qur'an, with supplementary references to Hadith and Prophetic biographies. Secondary sources, including scholarly books, journals, and articles, have also been rigorously analyzed. Furthermore, notable cases of terrorism in Bangladesh, conducted under the pretense of countering terrorism, have been personally investigated.

The findings confirm that Jihad and terrorism are fundamentally incompatible. Jihad, as practiced by the Prophet Muhammad (S.), was aimed at eradicating terrorism and establishing peace, whereas terrorism represents the antithesis of these principles. The Qur'an explicitly condemns violence and classifies atrocities as among the gravest crimes.

Finally, the study emphasizes the urgent need for the Muslim Ummah to address and rectify global misconceptions about Islam and Jihad. Institutions such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Saudi Arabia (KSA) should take the lead in disseminating the true essence of Jihad. Collaborative efforts involving prominent Islamic scholars from diverse regions, under the auspices of KSA, could establish a Shariah-based framework to regulate and clarify Jihadi practices while unequivocally distinguishing them from terrorism.

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## Chapter One

# Introduction

### **Context**

Atrocity has been perpetrated on this earth since the beginning of mankind. Thereafter, it has continued throughout the ages unto the modern time of globalization. Before getting this globalized form of terrorism, atrocity used to be inflicted upon individuals, groups and nations. It thus always posed as a poisonous boil in the face of the world's peace, harmony and prosperity and caused two world wars taking the toll of hundreds of thousands of human lives and destroying properties of uncountable measure. However, after the First World War the then world leaders tried to bring peace and stability on earth through forging 'League of Nations', but it failed completely to serve its purpose as another World War broke out for the second time. Thereafter, another global organization 'the United Nations' (UN) came up to create peace and bring stability in the world. Though this organization came into being with a high note and succeeded in bringing temporary peace and stability on earth, it soon sank into the interests of the global powerful quarters. At present, it is apparent that the UNO's actions, reactions and no-actions remain only within the fold of those blocs' strategic, geo-political, economic, and security interests. The UNO's moral strength has been weakened in relation to ensure justice amongst the global communities. Yet, it tries to enforce justice although difficulties are being posed by the big powers. This is how peace is being pushed behind and terrorism is let loose to generate conflicts, confrontations, battles and wars. If justice is not ensured for all irrespective of nation, race, colour, ethnicity, region, religion, caste etc, terrorism is surely going to engulf the future.

With the passage of time, terrorism has taken tactical, operational and strategic forms to be utilized by the perpetrators and by the terrorism-combatants as well. Various groups, ethnic communities, religious segments, nation states and non-state actors are conducting terror acts to pull off their group interests. As a result, the 'transnational terrorism' has come into being wherein the Westerners' popular battle - global war on terror - has also been transformed into a kind of perpetration of terrorism across the world.

The religion of Islam had emerged to bring peace, stability and prosperity in the world. The Messenger (SA) of Allah came with the message of Islam in a society which was most uncivilized, undeveloped, and evil-prone as well as barbarian in the then contemporary world. The Prophet (SA) worked around that dark society for long twenty-three years with the message of justice and quite successfully established peace and stability therein. Indeed, while he succeeded in his (SA) Islamic revolution, terrorism totally disappeared from the region of Arabian Peninsula during his (SA) period. The terrorists of Arab turned into the custodians of the peace of mankind with his (SA) noble touch. Actually, he (SA) began his anti-terrorist movement in Makkah before his investiture as Prophet. Afterward, the day he (SA) started preaching and calling people to the fold of Islam, he (SA) became the victim of persecution. The Quraishites enforced dire atrocities on him (SA) and his new followers, which forced them to flee the country. The Prophet (SA) himself had to migrate to Madinah to evade the assassination plot. In fact, the Messenger (SA) had been the worst victim of terrorism at Makkah in the history of mankind. Again, after migration to Madinah, the Quraishites imposed battle after battle to kill the Prophet (SA) and destroy his religion of Islam and the newly emerged Islamic state of Madinah, which was formed through the democratic process of landslide popular support. The Prophet (SA) thwarted all these terrorist acts through defensive