**Jihad**

***Jihad***, sometimes spelled **Jahad**, **Jehad**, **Jihaad** **Djehad** or **Cihad**, ([Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): جهاد‎ *ǧihād*) is an [Islamic term](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Islamic_terms_in_Arabic), from the Arabic root *ǧhd* ("to exert utmost effort, to strive, struggle"), which connotes a wide range of [meanings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Definition): anything from an inward spiritual struggle to attain perfect [faith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faith) to a political or military struggle to further the Islamic cause. Individuals involved in the political or military forms of jihad are often labeled with the [neologism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neologism) "jihadist".

The term "jihad" is often used to describe purely physical and military "[holy war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_war)", though "physical" struggle, only makes up part of the broader meaning of the concept of *jihad*. The denotation is of a struggle, challenge, difficulty or (frequently) opposed effort, made either in accomplishment or as resistance. A person who engages in any form of jihad can be called a [mujahid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujahid) (in plural: [mujahidin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujahidin)) ([Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic): striver, struggler), or [terrorist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorist), a term even more often applied to groups who practice armed struggle in the name of Islam by Islamic fundamentalists and non-Muslims. Such a person might engage in fighting as a military struggle for religious reasons, or for example, struggle to memorize the [Qur'an](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%27an). Jihad has a negative connotation and reputation in much of the West for its use of [terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism) on innocent civilians, on par with the reaction to the Christian term [crusade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crusade) from hundreds of years ago in much of the Islamic world. Jihad is considered [terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism) by much of the civilized world as jihad targets innocent civilians. The difference here is that Christian crusaders didn't strap bombs to themselves and blow themselves and innocent civilians in restaurants or while they were driving their carts.

**Classifications of Jihad by Muslims**

Jihad has been classified either as *al-jihād al-akbar* (the greater jihad), the struggle against one's soul (*nafs*), or *al-jihād al-asghar* (the lesser jihad), the external, physical effort, often implying fighting.

Muslim scholars explained there are five kinds of *jihad fi sabilillah* (struggle in the cause of God):

* **Jihad of the heart/soul** *(jihad bin nafs/qalb)* is an inner struggle of good against evil in the mind, through concepts such as [tawhid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tawhid).
* **Jihad by the tongue** *(jihad bil lisan)* is a struggle of good against evil waged by writing and speech, such as in the form of [dawah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dawah) (proselytizing), [Khutbas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khutba) (sermons), and political or military propaganda.
* **Jihad by the pen and knowledge** *(jihad bil qalam/ilm)* is a struggle for good against evil through scholarly study of Islam, [ijtihad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ijtihad%22%20%5Co%20%22Ijtihad) (legal reasoning), and through sciences (such as military and medical sciences).
* **Jihad by the hand** *(jihad bil yad)* refers to a struggle of good against evil waged by actions or with one's wealth, such as going on the [Hajj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hajj%22%20%5Co%20%22Hajj) pilgrimage (seen as the best jihad for women), taking care of elderly parents, providing funding for jihad, political activity for furthering the cause of [Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam%22%20%5Co%20%22Islam), stopping evil by force, or [espionage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Espionage%22%20%5Co%20%22Espionage).
* **Jihad by the sword** *(jihad bis saif)* refers to *qital fi sabilillah* (armed fighting in the way of God, or holy war).
* **Jihad of peace** refers to the struggle to make peace in the world, everywhere and anywhere.

[**Ibn Rushd**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Rushd), in his *Muqaddimāt*, divides Jihad into four kinds:

"Jihad by the heart; Jihad by the tongue; Jihad by the hand and Jihad by the sword." He defines "Jihad by the tongue" as "to commend good conduct and forbid the wrong, like the type of Jihad Allah (swt) ordered us to fulfill against the hypocrites in His Words, “O Prophet! Strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites” (Qur'an [9:73](http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/009.qmt.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22009.073%22%20%5Co%20%22http%3A//www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/009.qmt.html#009.073)). So the Prophet (s) strove against the unbelievers by sword and against the hypocrites by tongue.

[**Ibn al-Qayyim**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_al-Qayyim) says:

Jihad is of four kinds: *jihad an-nafs* (jihad against one’s self), *jihad ash-Shaytan* (jihad against Satan), jihad against the *kuffar* and jihad against the *hypocrites*.

***1. Jihad an-nafs*** (jihad against one’s self) is of four kinds:

**a.** Striving to learn the teachings of Islam **b**. Striving to make oneself act in accordance with what one has learned.**c.** Striving to call others to Islam, teaching those who do not know about it. **d.** Striving to bear patiently the difficulties involved in calling people to Allah and the insults of people, bearing all that for the sake of Allah. If a person achieves all four of these levels, then he will be one of the *rabbaniyyin* -- learned men of religion who practice what they know and also preach to others. (see [3:79](http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/003.qmt.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22003.079%22%20%5Co%20%22http%3A//www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/003.qmt.html#003.079)). The *salaf* (righteous predecessors) were agreed that the scholar does not deserve to be called a rabbani unless he knows the truth, acts in accordance with it, and teaches it to others. Whoever teaches, acts in accordance with his knowledge, and has knowledge will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

***2.Jihad ash-Shaytan*** (jihad against Satan) is of two types:**a.** Warding off the doubts that Satan stirs up to undermine faith. **b.** Striving against Satan to ward off the corrupt desires that he provokes. The first jihad is followed by certainty of faith, and the second is followed by patience. Allah says: “And We made from among them [Children of Israel], leaders, giving guidance under Our Command, when they were patient and used to believe with certainty in Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) ” ([32:24](http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/032.qmt.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22032.024%22%20%5Co%20%22http%3A//www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/032.qmt.html#032.024)). Allah tells us that leadership in religion is attained through patience and certainty of faith. Patience wards off desires and certainty wards off doubts.

**3. Jihad against the munafiqin** (hypocrites) and *[kuffar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kafir%22%20%5Co%20%22Kafir)* (disbelievers) is of four kinds: with the heart, the tongue, one’s wealth and oneself. Jihad against the disbelievers is more along the lines of physical fighting, whereas jihad against the hypocrites is more along the lines of using words and ideas.

[**Ibn Baz**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Baz) says:

Jihad is of various kinds, with one’s self, one's wealth, by making *dua*, by teaching and guiding, by helping to do good in any way. The greatest form of jihad is jihad with one’s self (i.e., going oneself and fighting), followed by jihad with one's wealth, jihad by speaking out and guiding others. *Dawah* is also part of jihad. But going out oneself to fight in jihad is the highest form. (Fatawa ash-Sheikh Ibn Baz, 7/334, 335).

[**Nawawi**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nawawi) in his book *al-Minhaj*, when defining Jihad and its different categories, said,

"one of the collective duties of the [community](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community%22%20%5Co%20%22Community) as a whole (fard kifaya) is to lodge a valid protest, to solve problems of religion, to have knowledge of Divine Law, to command what is right and forbid wrong conduct".

**Ramadan Buti**, a contemporary Orthodox scholar from Syria, in his work on the subject *Jihad in Islam* says.

Even before Muhammad conducted Jihad by sword against the unbelievers, there is no doubt the Prophet (s) invited these unbelievers peacefully, lodged protests against their beliefs and strove to remove their misgivings about Islam. When they refused any other solution, but rather declared a war against him and his message and initiated the fight, there was no alternative except to fight back".

**Imam al-Dardir** in his book *Aqarab al-Masalik* says

Jihad is propagating the knowledge of the Divine Law commending right and forbidding wrong. He emphasized that it is not permitted to skip this category of Jihad and implement the combative form, saying, "the first [Islamic] duty is to call people to enter the fold of Islam, even if they had been preached to by the Prophet (s) beforehand."

**Al-Hajj Talib 'Abdur-Rashid**, imam of the Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood in Harlem, NY, defines three levels of jihad -- personal, verbal and physical. Considering each in turn:

**Personal Jihad:** This is the most important form. This type of jihad, called the Jihadun-Nafs, is the intimate struggle to purify one's soul of evil influences -- both subtle and overt. It is the struggle to cleanse one's spirit of sin. Putting "Allah ahead of our loved ones, our wealth, our worldly ambitions and our own lives." Resisting pressure of parents, peers and society; strive against "the rejecters of faith..." (Qur'an [25:52](http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/025.qmt.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22025.052%22%20%5Co%20%22http%3A//www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/025.qmt.html#025.052)) "...strive and struggle to live as true Muslims..." "Striving for righteous deeds."Spreading the message of Islam. "The (true) believers are only those who believe in Allah and his messenger and afterward doubt not, but strive with their wealth and their selves for the cause of Allah. Such are the truthful." ([49:15](http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/049.qmt.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22049.015%22%20%5Co%20%22http%3A//www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/049.qmt.html#049.015))

**Verbal Jihad:** To strive for justice through words and non-violent actions. Muhammad encouraged Muslims to demand justice in the name of Allah. When asked: "'What kind of jihad is better?' Muhammad replied, 'A word of truth in front of an oppressive ruler*(Nisai). According to M. Amir Ali,* Jihad explained

The life of the Prophet Muhammad was full of striving to gain the freedom to inform and convey the message of Islam. During his stay in Makkah [Mecca] he used non-violent methods and after the establishment of his government in Madinah [Medina], by the permission of Allah, he used armed struggle against his enemies whenever he found it inevitable.

**Physical Jihad:** This relates to the use of physical force in defense of Muslims against oppression and transgression by the enemies of Allah, Islam and Muslims. Allah commands that Muslims lead peaceful lives and not transgress against anyone. If they are persecuted and oppressed, the Qur'an recommends that they migrate to a more peaceful and tolerant land: "Lo! Those who believe, and those who emigrate (to escape persecution) and strive (Jahadu) in the way of Allah, these have hope of Allah's mercy..." ([2:218](http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/002.qmt.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22002.218%22%20%5Co%20%22http%3A//www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/002.qmt.html#002.218)). If relocation is not possible, then Allah also requires Muslims to defend themselves against oppression by "fighting against those who fight against us." 2 The Qur'an states: "To those against whom war is made, permission is given [to defend themselves], because they are wronged - and verily, Allah is Most Powerful to give them victory." ([22:39](http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/022.qmt.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22022.039%22%20%5Co%20%22http%3A//www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/022.qmt.html#022.039))

**Imam Bahouti** commences the chapter on Jihad in his book Kashf al-Kinaa by showing the injunctions of collective religious duties (kifaya) that the Muslim Nation must achieve before embarking on combative Jihad, including preaching and education about the religion of Islam, dismissing all the uncertainties about this religion and making available all the skills and qualifications which people might need in their religious, secular, physical and financial interests because these constitute the regulations of both this life and the life to come.

**Permission for Jihad according to Islamic jurists**

The first starting points on Jihad can be found in the [Qur'an](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%27an%22%20%5Co%20%22Qur%27an) and [Hadith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith%22%20%5Co%20%22Hadith). The Hadith offers more context than the Qu'ran. One of the Books of the Hadith of Bukhari has a chapter titled "Striving for the cause of Allah (Jihaad)"

It is important to note that there are several sects within [Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam%22%20%5Co%20%22Islam) and four differing schools of thought (see [Madhhabs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhhab%22%20%5Co%20%22Madhhab)). These sects may differ in their interpretations of basic Islamic precepts, Jihad being one of them. Madhhabs generally agree on the main issues of islaam. The opinions of scholars such as [Ibn Taymiya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Taymiya%22%20%5Co%20%22Ibn%20Taymiya) are not followed or even recognized by most Muslims, though his opinions are held in high esteem amongst many who consider themselves followers of the [Salafi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salafi%22%20%5Co%20%22Salafi) sect.

According to Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani a 10th century Maliki jurist:

Jihad is a precept of Divine institution. Its performance by certain individuals may dispense others from it. We Malikis maintain that it is preferable not to begin hostilities with the enemy before having invited the latter to embrace the religion of Allah except where the enemy attacks first. They have the alternative of either converting to Islam or paying the poll tax (jizya), short of which war will be declared against them.

According to al-Mawardi an 11th Century Shafi'i jurist:

The mushrikun [infidels] of Dar al-Harb (the arena of battle) are of two types: First, those whom the call of Islam has reached, but they have refused it and have taken up arms. The amir of the army has the option of fighting them…in accordance with what he judges to be in the best interest of the Muslims and most harmful to the mushrikun… Second, those whom the invitation to Islam has not reached, although such persons are few nowadays since Allah has made manifest the call of his Messenger…it is forbidden to…begin an attack before explaining the invitation to Islam to them, informing them of the miracles of the Prophet and making plain the proofs so as to encourage acceptance on their part; if they still refuse to accept after this, war is waged against them and they are treated as those whom the call has reached…

Ibn Taymiyya, a 14th Century Hanbali jurist15:

Since lawful warfare is essentially jihad and since its aim is that the religion is God's entirely and God's word is uppermost, therefore according to all Muslims, those who stand in the way of this aim must be fought. As for those who cannot offer resistance or cannot fight, such as women, children, monks, old people, the blind, handicapped and their likes, they shall not be killed unless they actually fight with words (e.g. by propaganda) and acts (e.g. by spying or otherwise assisting in the warfare).

In the Hidayah, vol. II. p. 140 ([Hanafi school](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanafi_school%22%20%5Co%20%22Hanafi%20school)):

It is not lawful to make war upon any people who have never before been called to the faith, without previously requiring them to embrace it, because the Prophet so instructed his commanders, directing them to call the infidels to the faith, and also because the people will hence perceive that they are attacked for the sake of religion, and not for the sake of taking their property, or making slaves of their children, and on this consideration it is possible that they may be induced to agree to the call, in order to save themselves from the troubles of war… If the infidels, upon receiving the call, neither consent to it nor agree to pay capitation tax, it is then incumbent on the Muslims to call upon God for assistance, and to make war upon them, because God is the assistant of those who serve Him, and the destroyer of His enemies, the infidels, and it is necessary to implore His aid upon every occasion; the Prophet, moreover, commands us so to do."

[Ibn Khaldun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Khaldun), the 15th century Tunisian historian:

In the Muslim community, the holy war is a religious duty, because of the universalism of the Muslim mission and the obligation to convert everybody to Islam either by persuasion or by force... The other religious groups did not have a universal mission, and the holy war was not a religious duty for them, save only for purposes of defense... Islam is under obligation to gain power over other nations.

According to [Javed Ahmed Ghamidi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Javed_Ahmed_Ghamidi%22%20%5Co%20%22Javed%20Ahmed%20Ghamidi), a [Sunni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunni%22%20%5Co%20%22Sunni) Islamic scholar, in [Mizan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mizan%22%20%5Co%20%22Mizan):

There are certain directives of the [Qur’an](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%E2%80%99an%22%20%5Co%20%22Qur%E2%80%99an) pertaining to war which were specific only to the Prophet Muhammad against Divinely specified peoples of his times (the [polytheists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polytheists%22%20%5Co%20%22Polytheists) and the [Israelites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israelites%22%20%5Co%20%22Israelites) and [Nazarites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarites%22%20%5Co%20%22Nazarites) of [Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabia%22%20%5Co%20%22Arabia) and some other [Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews%22%20%5Co%20%22Jews), [Christians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christians), et al) as a form of Divine punishment -- for they had persistently denied the truth of the Prophet's mission even after it had been made conclusively evident to them by God through the Prophet, and asked the polytheists of Arabia for submission to Islam as a condition for exoneration and the others for [jizya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jizya%22%20%5Co%20%22Jizya) and submission to the political authority of the Muslims for exemption from death punishment and for military protection as the [dhimmis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhimmis%22%20%5Co%20%22Dhimmis) of the Muslims. Therefore, after the Prophet and his companions, there is no concept in Islam obliging Muslims to wage war for propagation or implementation of Islam. The only valid basis for jihad through arms is to end oppression when all other measures have failed. Islam only allows Jihad to be conducted by a [Government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government%22%20%5Co%20%22Government) with at least half the power of the enemy.

**General theological issues**

**Greater and lesser jihad**

Nearly all Muslims believe that the non-military jihad is the "greater jihad" and the military jihad is the "lesser jihad." The [Sufis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sufi) as well as the traditions of Hadith (sayings of the Holy Prophet) are particularly known for supporting this tradition, though some Sufis prefer to use the Arabic word *[mujahada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujahada%22%20%5Co%20%22Mujahada)* instead of "greater jihad." It is also worth noting that the Sufistic opinion is not the mainstream opinion, and most Sufi societies ignore the bulk of the responsibilities and practices of majority Islam.

Islamic scholar [Gibril Haddad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gibril_Haddad%22%20%5Co%20%22Gibril%20Haddad) has analyzed the basis for the belief that internal jihad is the greater jihad. ("Jihad al-akbar"). Haddad identifies the primary historical basis for this belief in a pair of similarly worded [hadeeth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith%22%20%5Co%20%22Hadith), in which Muhammed is reported to have told warriors returning home that they had returned from the lesser jihad of struggle against unbelievers to a greater jihad of struggle against lust Although Haddad notes that the authenticity of both hadeeth is questionable, he nevertheless concludes that the underlying principle of superiority internal jihad does have a reliable basis in the Koran and other writings.

As stated, the validity of those [hadeeth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadeeth%22%20%5Co%20%22Hadeeth) is disputed, especially by Western Orientalists and Islamic Fundamentalists- other hadeeth indicate that violent jihad is the greater of the two, and Islamic scholar and alleged founder of [Salafi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salafi%22%20%5Co%20%22Salafi) thought, [Ibn Taymiyya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Taymiyya%22%20%5Co%20%22Ibn%20Taymiyya), famously criticized some of the non-violent hadeeth and went so far as to say that "Jihad against the disbelievers is the most noble of actions, and moreover it is the most important action for the sake of mankind."

However, Ibn Taymiyya also made statements supporting the concept of internal struggle as the greater jihad. Near the end of [Rawdat al-Muhibbin](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rawdat_al-muhibbin_wa-nuzhat_al-mushtaqin&action=edit" \o "Rawdat al-muhibbin wa-nuzhat al-mushtaqin), [Ibn al-Qayyim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_al-Qayyim) quotes Taymiyya as follows: "I heard our Shaykh say, 'The jihad of "nafs" (the inner self) and "hawa" (desires) is the foundation of jihad of the disbelievers and hypocrites; one cannot do jihad of them before he first does jihad of his nafs and hawa, then he goes out and fights them.'" Ibn al-Qayyim too writes about the jihad of the ego as the "prime" (al-muqaddam) and "most obligatory" (al-afraD) jihad in al-Fawa'id, Zad al-Ma`ad, al-Ruh, Ighathat al-Lahfan e.t.c. Similarly, Sunni scholars consider a number of hadeeth supporting non-violent jihad to be authentic. So although there seems to be a controversy about the authenticity of certain hadiths and certain interpretations of hadiths, Muslims agree that the struggle for purification of self (Jihad bin nafs) is extremely important.

**Eschatology**

Some Islamic traditions exalt jihad by the sword as the greatest deed while others place such practices as [salat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salat) higher in rank for the believer.

The [Qur'an](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%27an) exalts "those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah with their goods and persons" above "those who sit and receive no hurt," [Qur'an 4:95], and also orders Muslims to observe guidelines of ethical behavior during times of war. There are various traditions in the [hadith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith) suggesting that, in the afterlife, no deed equals jihad in reward. It is worth noting here that there are literally tens of thousands of ahadeeth, many of dubious authenticity. Other traditions hold that taking care of parents, or speaking against tyrants, or remembering God constantly, can earn a greater reward than death on the battlefield, although most muslims would agree that any cause would take second place to the defence of Islam.

**Jihad as warfare**

*See also:* [*Offensive jihad*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offensive_jihad)*and* [*Defensive jihad*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defensive_jihad)

The word "jihad" is widely but simplistically understood to refer (only) to "holy war." When the 'struggle' of jihad refers to a military action or expedition, Islamic textual sources expounds an elaborate military doctrines and moral policies which lay down the basic [rules of war in Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rules_of_war_in_Islam) as well as a political ideology.

Muslim theologians divide the world into two parts. The [Dar al-Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dar_al-Islam) (land of Islam), includes all lands where Muslims could expect to be treated fairly, and have their religious practices and traditions respected by the governing system (these include nations under Islamic government or governments that are Muslim-run, and nations run by non-Muslims that treat Muslims with equality). The other part, called [Dar al-Harb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dar_al-Harb) (land of war), includes those territories where Muslims are in any way barred from free exercise of their religion.

The concept of warfare in Islam is of two distinct types: defensive jihad, which is defense of the [Dar al-Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dar_al-Islam), and offensive jihad which is the military conquest of the [Dar al-Harb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dar_al-Harb). Muslims differ greatly in their understanding of what justifies declarations of either forms of warfare, and many believe that 'offensive jihad' was a necessity in the environment of feudal times, and is generally not reasonable in the modern age. However the two most popular movements in the modern Islamic world, Ikwan ul Muslemeen (in Egypt and other, mostly Arab, Muslim countries) and Jamaat e Islami (Pakistan & Indian Sub-continent), have always advocated extreme form of militancy under the pretext of Jihad. This extreme form is considered as "Extremist Islam" or "Radical Islam" and endorses the use of terrorism in the way of suicide bombing on innocent civilians in the name of Allah. Jihad is condemned by the United Nations and is considered an "illegal" form of warfare as it targets innocent women and children solely on the basis of not being muslim. Many jihadists cosider the non-muslims "infindels" and would murder anyone at anytime in the name of religion.

History records instances of the "call for jihad" being invoked by Islamic leaders to 'legitimate' wars of conquest. The major imperial Muslim dynasties of Ottoman Turkey (Sunni) and Persia (Shia), each established systems of authority around traditional Islamic institutions. Part of this incorporation involved various interpretations of jihad. For example, in the Ottoman empire the concept of [ghaza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghaza) was promulgated as a sister obligation to jihad. The Ottoman ruler [Mehmed II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mehmed_II) is said to have insisted on the conquest of Constantinople by justifying *ghaza* as a basic duty. Later Ottoman rulers would apply *ghaza* to justify military campaigns against the Perian Safavid dynasty. Thus both rival empires established a tradition that a ruler was only considered truly in charge when his armies has been sent into the field in the name of the true faith, usually against *giaurs* or heretics -often meaning each other-, often invoking some [Sufi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sufi) or other theological dispute, but rather driven by the universal craving for power, prestige, and if possible booty or territory. The 'missionary' vocation of the Muslim dynasties was prestigious enough to be formally reflected in a formal title as part of a full ruler style- the Ottoman (many also had Ghazi as part of their name) Sultan [Murad Khan II Khoja-Ghazi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murad_Khan_II_Khoja-Ghazi), 6th Sovereign of the House of Osman (1421 - 1451), literally used [Sultan ul-Mujahidin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sultan_ul-Mujahidin)

The so-called [Fulbe jihad states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulbe_jihad_state) and a few other jihad states in [western Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Africa) were established by a series of offensive wars.

The commands inculcated in the Quran (in five suras from the period after Muhammad had established his power) on Muslims to put to the sword those who will neither embrace Islam nor pay a poll-tax (*jizya*) were not interpreted as a general injunction on all Muslims constantly to make war on the infidels (originally only polytheists, not Jews and Christians, who are called "People of the Book", since Jesus is seen as the the last of the precursors of the Prophet Muhammed; the word infidel had different historical uses, notably used by the Crusaders to refer to the Muslims they were fighting against). It was generally supposed that the order for a general war can only be given by the [Caliph](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliph) (an office that was claimed by the Ottoman sultans), but Muslims who did not acknowledge the spiritual authority of the Caliphate (which is vacant), such as non-Sunnis and non-Ottoman Muslim states, always looked to their own rulers for the proclamation of a jihad; there has been in fact no universal warfare by Muslims on unbelievers since the early caliphate. Jihad was generally proclaimed by whoever claimed to be a [mahdi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahdi), e.g. the Sudanese [Mahommed Ahmad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahommed_Ahmad) in 1882.

In the [Shiite](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shiite) viewpoint "defensive jihad" doesn't need to any order and every Muslim should participate in it but just the [prophet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohamad) and [Imams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imamah_%28Shi%27a_doctrine%29) can give the order of "offensive jihad".

**Non-Muslim opinions**

The [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) [Department of Justice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_of_Justice) has used its own *ad hoc* definitions of jihad in indictments of individuals involved in terrorist activities:

* "As used in this First Superseding Indictment, 'Jihad' is the Arabic word meaning 'holy war'. In this context, jihad refers to the use of violence, including paramilitary action against persons, governments deemed to be enemies of a fundamentalist version of Islam."
* "As used in this Superseding Indictment, 'violent jihad' or 'jihad' include planning, preparing for, and engaging in, acts of physical violence, including murder, maiming, kidnapping, and hostage-taking." in the indictment against several individuals including [Jose Padilla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jose_Padilla).

[Karen Armstrong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karen_Armstrong) in her book ["Muhammed"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%3A_a_Biography_of_the_Prophet_%28book%29), writes:

"Fighting and warfare might sometimes be necessary, but it was only a minor part of the whole jihad or struggle.

The noted specialist of Islam, [Maxime Rodinson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maxime_Rodinson), wrote that "Jihad is a propagandistic device which, as need be, resorts to armed struggle – two ingredients common to many ideological movements." (Maxime Rodinson. *Muhammad*. Random House, Inc., New York, 2002. p. 351.)

The [neologism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neologism) **jihadist** is sometimes used to describe [militant Islamic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Militant_Islam) groups, including but not restricted to [Islamist terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamist_terrorism) (see for example [Jihadist organizations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category%3AJihadist_organizations)). The term is deemed offensive by many Muslims who see it as vilifying the more complex [ideology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ideology) of jihad.

The Islamic religious legitimacy of the goals or methods of various [Islamist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamism) movements who adopt the terminology of jihad is often brought into question by other Muslims as jihad is an act of inhumane warfare against citizens and civilians. Suicide bombers routinely blow themselves and innocents up to instill fear in those they are trying to terrorize.

**Other uses**

Jihad is also given as a first name, e.g. [Jihad Ballout](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad_Ballout) and [Jihad Ahmed Jibril](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad_Ahmed_Jibril); or used in a nick-name, e.g. [Abu Jihad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Jihad)

Even unrelated to Islam, the word has been used in names, e.g. the Australian hardcore punk band [Jihad Against America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad_Against_America)

The [collectible card game](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectible_card_game) [Vampire: The Eternal Struggle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vampire%3A_The_Eternal_Struggle) was originally named 'Jyhad' (note the different spelling) after a non-Islamic concept of the [roleplaying game](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roleplaying_game) it is set in.

[Thrash metal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thrash_metal) group [Slayer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slayer) have a song entitled "[Jihad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad_%28song%29)" on their upcoming [Christ Illusion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_Illusion) album, where the [September 11, 2001](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11%2C_2001) terrorist attacks are told from the point of view of a so called "jihadist".