**Islamism**

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*This article is about the political Islamic movement. For the religion of Islam, see* [*Islam*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam)*.*

*"Islamic extremist groups" redirects here. For Islamic extremist ideologies, see* [*Islamic extremism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_extremism)*.*

**Islamism** ([Urdu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urdu_language): اسلام پرستی‎; [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): إسلاموية‎), also known as **Political Islam**, is a set of [ideologies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_political_ideologies) holding that "Islam should guide social and political as well as personal life." Islamism is a controversial concept not just because it posits a political role for Islam but also because its most extreme advocates believe their Islamic views are superior to all others', and that the contrary idea that Islam is, or can be, apolitical is an error. Islamists can have varying interpretations on various [Quranic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [suras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surah) and [ayahs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayah). Islamist views emphasize the implementation of [Sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia) (Islamic law); of [pan-Islamic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan-Islamism) political unity; and of the selective removal of non-Muslim, particularly [Western](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_world) military, economic, political, social, or cultural influences in the [Muslim world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_world) that they believe to be incompatible with Islam.

Some observers (Graham Fuller) suggest Islamism's tenets are less strict, and can be defined as a form of [identity politics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identity_politics) or "support for Muslim identity, authenticity, broader regionalism, revivalism, and revitalization of the community." Following the [Arab Spring](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Spring), [Olivier Roy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olivier_Roy_(professor)) described political Islam as "increasingly interdependent" with political democracy.

Islamists generally oppose the use of the term, claiming that their political beliefs and goals are simply an expression of Islamic religious belief. Similarly, some experts ([Bernard Lewis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_Lewis)) favor the term "activist Islam", or "political Islam" (Trevor Stanley), and some ([Robin Wright](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robin_Wright_(author))) have equated the term "militant Islam" with terrorism.

Central and prominent figures of modern Islamism include [Hasan al-Banna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasan_al-Banna), [Sayyid Qutb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayyid_Qutb), [Abul Ala Maududi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abul_Ala_Maududi), and [Ruhollah Khomeini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruhollah_Khomeini).

**Definitions**

Islamism has been defined as:

* "the belief that Islam should guide social and political as well as personal life",
* movement of "supporters of government in accord with the laws of Islam and who view the Quran as a political model" ([Associated Press](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Associated_Press)'s (AP) original definition of "Islamist")
* a pejorative shorthand for [extremist Muslims](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extremist_Muslims) or Muslims the American news media "don't like." ("[Council on American–Islamic Relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_on_American%E2%80%93Islamic_Relations) complaint about old AP definition of Islamist)
* "a theocratic ideology that seeks to impose any version of Islam over society *by law*". ([Maajid Nawaz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maajid_Nawaz), a former Islamist turned critic)
* "the [Islamic] ideology that guides society as a whole and that teaches law must be in conformity with the Islamic sharia",
* an unsustainably flexible movement of ... everything to everyone: an alternative social provider to the poor masses; an angry platform for the disillusioned young; a loud trumpet-call announcing `a return to the pure religion` to those seeking an identity; a "progressive, moderate religious platform` for the affluent and liberal; ... and at the extremes, a violent vehicle for rejectionists and radicals.
* an Islamic "movement that seeks cultural differentiation from the West and reconnection with the pre-colonial symbolic universe",
* "the organized political trend, owing its modern origin to the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928, that seeks to solve modern political problems by reference to Muslim texts",
* "the whole body of thought which seeks to invest society with Islam which may be integrationist, but may also be traditionalist, reform-minded or even revolutionary",
* "the active assertion and promotion of beliefs, prescriptions, laws or policies that are held to be Islamic in character,"
* a movement of "Muslims who draw upon the belief, symbols, and language of Islam to inspire, shape, and animate political activity;" which may contain moderate, tolerant, peaceful activists or those who "preach intolerance and espouse violence."
* a term "used by outsiders to denote a strand of activity which they think justifies their misconception of Islam as something rigid and immobile, a mere tribal affiliation."

Islamism takes different forms and spans a wide range of strategies and tactics towards the powers in place -- "destruction, opposition, collaboration, indifference" that have varied as "circumstances have changed" —and thus is not a [united movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan-Islamism).

Moderate and reformist Islamists who accept and work within the democratic process include parties like the Tunisian [Ennahda Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ennahda_Movement). [Jamaat-e-Islami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamaat-e-Islami_Pakistan) of Pakistan is basically a socio-political and democratic [Vanguard party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vanguard_party) but has also gained political influence through military [coup d'état](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coup_d%27%C3%A9tat) in past. The Islamist groups like [Hezbollah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hezbollah) in [Lebanon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon) and [Hamas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas) in [Palestine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine) participate in democratic and political process as well as armed attacks, seeking to abolish the state of [Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel). [Radical Islamist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radical_Islam) organizations like [al-Qaeda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Qaeda) and the [Egyptian Islamic Jihad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_Islamic_Jihad), and groups such as the [Taliban](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban), entirely reject [democracy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy), often declaring as [*kuffar*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kafir) those Muslims who support it (see [*takfirism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Takfir)), as well as calling for violent/[offensive jihad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offensive_jihad) or urging and conducting [attacks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_terrorism) on a religious basis.

Another major division within Islamism is between what [Graham E. Fuller](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graham_E._Fuller) has described as the fundamentalist "guardians of the tradition" ([Salafis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salafism), such as those in the [Wahhabi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahhabi) movement) and the "vanguard of change and Islamic reform" centered around the [Muslim Brotherhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood). [Olivier Roy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olivier_Roy_(professor)) argues that "Sunni pan-Islamism underwent a remarkable shift in the second half of the 20th century" when the [Muslim Brotherhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood) movement and its focus on Islamisation of [pan-Arabism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan-Arabism) was eclipsed by the [Salafi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salafi) movement with its emphasis on "sharia rather than the building of Islamic institutions," and rejection of Shia Islam. Following the [Arab Spring](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Spring), Roy has described Islamism as "increasingly interdependent" with democracy in much of the Arab Muslim world, such that "neither can now survive without the other." While Islamist political culture itself may not be democratic, Islamists need democratic elections to maintain their legitimacy. At the same time, their popularity is such that no government can call itself democratic that excludes mainstream Islamist groups.

**History of the term**

The term, which originally denoted the religion of Islam, first appeared in English as *Islamismus* in 1696, and as *Islamism* in 1712. By the turn of the twentieth century it had begun to be displaced by the shorter and purely Arabic term "Islam" and by 1938, when Orientalist scholars completed *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, seems to have virtually disappeared from English usage.

The term "Islamism" acquired its contemporary connotations in French academia in the late 1970s and early 1980s. From French, it began to migrate to the English language in the mid-1980s, and in recent years has largely displaced the term [Islamic fundamentalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_fundamentalism) in academic circles.

The use of the term Islamism was at first "a marker for scholars more likely to sympathize" with new Islamic movements; however, as the term gained popularity it became more specifically associated with political groups such as the [Taliban](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban) or the Algerian [Armed Islamic Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Islamic_Group), as well as with highly publicized acts of violence.

"Islamists" who have spoken out against the use of the term insisting they are merely "Muslims", include [Ayatollah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayatollah) [Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammad_Hussein_Fadlallah), the spiritual mentor of [Hizbullah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hizbullah), and [Abbassi Madani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbassi_Madani), leader of the Algerian [Islamic Salvation Front](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Salvation_Front).

A 2003 article in [*Middle East Quarterly*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East_Quarterly) states:

In summation, the term Islamism enjoyed its first run, lasting from Voltaire to the [First World War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I), as a synonym for Islam. Enlightened scholars and writers generally preferred it to [Mohammedanism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammed). Eventually both terms yielded to Islam, the Arabic name of the faith, and a word free of either pejorative or comparative associations. There was no need for any other term, until the rise of an ideological and political interpretation of Islam challenged scholars and commentators to come up with an alternative, to distinguish Islam as modern ideology from Islam as a faith... To all intents and purposes, Islamic fundamentalism and Islamism have become synonyms in contemporary American usage.

The [Council on American–Islamic Relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_on_American%E2%80%93Islamic_Relations) complained in 2013 that the [Associated Press](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Associated_Press)'s definition of "Islamist"—a "supporter of government in accord with the laws of Islam and who view the Quran as a political model"—had become a pejorative shorthand for "Muslims we don't like."

The [AP Stylebook](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AP_Stylebook) entry for Islamist now reads as follows:

"An advocate or supporter of a political movement that favors reordering government and society in accordance with laws prescribed by Islam. Do not use as a synonym for Islamic fighters, militants, extremists or radicals, who may or may not be Islamists. Where possible, be specific and use the name of militant affiliations: al-Qaida-linked, Hezbollah, Taliban, etc. Those who view the Quran as a political model encompass a wide range of Muslims, from mainstream politicians to militants known as jihadi."

**Relation to Islam**

*Further information:* [*Political aspects of Islam*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_aspects_of_Islam)



*Al-Liwaa*, the "state flag of the Islamic [Caliphate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan-Islamism)"



The [*Raya*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-raya) or "black flag of [Jihad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad)"

Islamism is a controversial concept not just because it posits a political role for Islam but also because its supporters believe their views merely reflect Islam, while the contrary idea that Islam is, or can be, apolitical is an error. Scholars and observers who do not believe that Islam is merely a political ideology include [Fred Halliday](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Halliday), [John Esposito](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Esposito) and Muslim intellectuals like [Javed Ahmad Ghamidi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Javed_Ahmad_Ghamidi). Hayri Abaza argues the failure to distinguish between Islam and Islamism leads many in the West to support illiberal Islamic regimes, to the detriment of progressive moderates who seek to separate religion from politics.

Islamists have asked the question, "If Islam is a way of life, how can we say that those who want to live by its principles in legal, social, political, economic, and political spheres of life are not Muslims, but Islamists and believe in Islamism, not [just] Islam?" Similarly, a writer for the [International Crisis Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Crisis_Group) maintains that "the conception of 'political Islam'" is a creation of Americans to explain the [Iranian Islamic Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_Revolution) and apolitical Islam was a historical fluke of the "short-lived era of the heyday of secular Arab nationalism between 1945 and 1970", and it is [quietist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_quietism)/non-political Islam, not Islamism, that requires explanation.

On the other hand, Muslim-owned and run media (not just Western media) have used the terms "Islamist" and "Islamism" — as distinguished from Muslim and Islam — to distinguish groups such as the [Islamic Salvation Front](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Salvation_Front) in Algeria or [Jamaa Islamiya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Gama%27a_al-Islamiyya) in Egypt, which actively seek to implement Islamic law, from mainstream Muslim groups.

Another source distinguishes Islamist from Islamic "by the fact that the latter refers to a religion and culture in existence over a millennium, whereas the first is a political/religious phenomenon linked to the great events of the 20th century". Islamists have, at least at times, defined themselves as "Islamiyyoun/Islamists" to differentiate themselves from "Muslimun/Muslims".

According to historian [Bernard Lewis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_Lewis), Islamism, (or as he terms it "activist" Islam), along with "quietism," form two "particular ... political traditions" in Islam.

The arguments in favor of both are based, as are most early Islamic arguments, on the [Holy Book](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) and on the actions and sayings of the [Prophet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad).

The [quietist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_Quietism) tradition obviously rests on the Prophet as sovereign, as judge and statesman. But before the Prophet became a head of state, he was a rebel. Before he traveled from [Mecca](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca) to [Medina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medina), where he became sovereign, he was an opponent of the existing order. He led an opposition against the pagan oligarchy of Mecca and at a certain point went into exile and formed what in modern language might be called a "government in exile," with which finally he was able to return in triumph to his birthplace and establish the Islamic state in Mecca. ...

The Prophet as rebel has provided a sort of paradigm of revolution—opposition and rejection, withdrawal and departure, exile and return. Time and time again movements of opposition in Islamic history tried to repeat this pattern, a few of them successfully.

—Bernard Lewis (Islamic Revolution)

[Daniel Pipes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Pipes) describes Islamism as a modern ideology that owes more to European utopian political ideologies and "isms" than to the traditional Islamic religion.

**Influence**

Few observers contest the influence of Islamism in the Muslim world. Following the [collapse of the Soviet Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_Soviet_Union), political movements based on the [liberal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberalism) ideology of free expression and democratic rule have led the opposition in other parts of the world such as [Latin America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_America), [Eastern Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Europe) and many parts of [Asia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia); however "the simple fact is that political Islam currently reigns as the most powerful ideological force across the Muslim world today".

Even some of those (such as Olivier Roy) who see Islamism as fraught with contradictions believe "the socioeconomic realities that sustained the Islamist wave are still here and are not going to change: poverty, uprootedness, crises in values and identities, the decay of the educational systems, the North-South opposition, and the problem of immigrant integration into the host societies".

The strength of Islamism draws from the strength of religiosity in general in the Muslim world. Compared to Western societies, "what is striking about the Islamic world is that ... it seems to have been the least penetrated by [irreligion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irreligion)".

Where other peoples may look to the physical or social sciences for answers in areas which their ancestors regarded as best left to scripture, in the Muslim world, religion has become more encompassing, not less, as "in the last few decades, it has been the fundamentalists who have increasingly represented the cutting edge" of Muslim culture.

In Egypt and the rest of the Muslim world "the word secular, a label proudly worn 30 years ago, is shunned" and "used to besmirch" political foes. The small secular opposition parties "cannot compare" with Islamists in terms of "doggedness, courage," "risk-taking" or "organizational skills".

In the Middle East and Pakistan, religious discourse dominates societies, the airwaves, and thinking about the world. Radical mosques have proliferated throughout Egypt. Book stores are dominated by works with religious themes ... The demand for sharia, the belief that their governments are unfaithful to Islam and that Islam is the answer to all problems, and the certainty that the West has declared war on Islam; these are the themes that dominate public discussion. Islamists may not control parliaments or government palaces, but they have occupied the popular imagination.

Moderate strains of Islamism have been described as "competing in the democratic public square in places like Turkey, Tunisia, Malaysia and Indonesia. In [Morocco](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morocco), the Islamist [Justice and Development Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_and_Development_Party_(Morocco)) (PJD) supported [King Muhammad VI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammed_VI_of_Morocco)'s "Mudawana", a "startlingly progressive family law" which grants women the right to a divorce, raises the minimum age for marriage to 18, and, in the event of separation, stipulates equal distribution of property.

Even before the Arab Spring, Islamists in Egypt and other Muslim countries had been described as "extremely influential. ... They determine how one dresses, what one eats. In these areas, they are incredibly successful. ... Even if the Islamists never come to power, they have transformed their countries." [Democratic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_democracy), peaceful and political Islamists are now dominating the spectrum of Islamist ideology as well as the political system of the [Muslim world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_world).

**Sources of strength**

Amongst the various reasons for the global strength of Islamism are:

**Western alienation**

*Further information:* [*Islam and modernity*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_and_modernity)



An Islamist protestor in London protesting over anti-Muslim cartoons, 6 February 2006

Muslim alienation from [Western](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_world) ways, including its political ways.

* The memory in Muslim societies of the many centuries of "cultural and institutional success" of Islamic civilization that have created an "intense resistance to an alternative 'civilizational order'", such as Western civilization,
* The proximity of the core of the Muslim world to Europe and Christendom where it first conquered and then was conquered. [Iberia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Andalus) in the seventh century, the [Crusades](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crusades) which began in the eleventh century, then for centuries the [Ottoman Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire), were all fields of war between Europe and Islam.

The Islamic world was aware of European fear and hatred:

For almost a thousand years, from the first Moorish landing in Spain to the second Turkish siege of Vienna, Europe was under constant threat from Islam. In the early centuries it was a double threat — not only of invasion and conquest, but also of conversion and assimilation. All but the easternmost provinces of the Islamic realm had been taken from Christian rulers, and the vast majority of the first Muslims west of Iran and Arabia were converts from Christianity ... Their loss was sorely felt and it heightened the fear that a similar fate was in store for Europe.

and also felt its own anger and resentment at the much more recent technological superiority of westerners who,

are the perpetual teachers; we, the perpetual students. Generation after generation, this asymmetry has generated an [inferiority complex](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inferiority_complex), forever exacerbated by the fact that their innovations progress at a faster pace than we can absorb them. ... The best tool to reverse the inferiority complex to a [superiority complex](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superiority_complex) ... Islam would give the whole culture a sense of dignity.

For Islamists, the primary threat of the West is cultural rather than political or economic. Cultural dependency robs one of faith and identity and thus destroys Islam and the Islamic community ([*ummah*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ummah)) far more effectively than political rule.

* The end of the [Cold War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War) and Soviet occupation of Afghanistan has eliminated the common atheist [Communist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communism) enemy uniting some religious Muslims and the capitalist west.

**Western patronage**

During the 1970s and sometimes later, Western and pro-Western governments often supported sometimes fledgling Islamists and Islamist groups that later came to be seen as dangerous enemies. Islamists were considered by Western governments bulwarks against—what were thought to be at the time—more dangerous [leftist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leftist)/[communist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist)/[nationalist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalist) insurgents/opposition, which Islamists were correctly seen as opposing. The US spent billions of dollars to aid the [mujahideen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_war_in_Afghanistan#Foreign_involvement_and_aid_to_the_mujahideen) Muslim Afghanistan enemies of the [Soviet Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union), and non-Afghan [veterans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_Arabs#Attitude_to_the_West) of the war returned home with their prestige, "experience, ideology, and weapons", and had considerable impact.

Although it is a strong opponent of Israel's existence, [Hamas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas), officially created in 1987, traces back its origins to institutions and clerics supported by Israel in the 1970s and 1980s. Israel tolerated and supported Islamist movements in Gaza, with figures like [Ahmed Yassin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheikh_Ahmed_Yassin), as Israel perceived them preferable to the secular and then more powerful [al-Fatah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Fatah) with the [PLO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PLO).

Egyptian President [Anwar Sadat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anwar_Sadat) – whose policies included opening Egypt to Western investment ([*infitah*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infitah)); transferring Egypt's allegiance from the Soviet Union to the United States; and [making peace with Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt%E2%80%93Israel_Peace_Treaty) – released Islamists from prison and welcomed home exiles in tacit exchange for political support in his struggle against leftists. His "encouraging of the emergence of the Islamist movement" was said to have been "imitated by many other Muslim leaders in the years that followed." This "gentlemen's agreement" between Sadat and Islamists broke down in 1975 but not before Islamists came to completely dominate university student unions. Sadat was later assassinated and a [formidable insurgency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism_in_Egypt) was formed in Egypt in the 1990s. The French government has also been reported to have promoted Islamist preachers "in the hope of channeling Muslim energies into zones of piety and charity."

**Resurgence of Islam**

*Further information:* [*Islamic revival*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_revival)

The resurgence of Islamic devotion and the attraction to things Islamic can be traced to several events.

* By the end of World War I, most Muslim states were seen to be dominated by the Christian-leaning Western states. It is argued that either the claims of Islam were false and the Christian or post-Christian West had finally come up with another system that was superior, or Islam had failed through not being true to itself. Thus, a redoubling of faith and devotion by Muslims was called for to reverse this tide.
* The connection between the lack of an Islamic spirit and the lack of victory was underscored by the disastrous defeat of Arab nationalist-led armies fighting under the slogan "Land, Sea and Air" in the 1967 [Six Day War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six_Day_War), compared to the (perceived) near-victory of the [Yom Kippur War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yom_Kippur_War) six years later. In that war the military's slogan was "God is Great".
* Along with the Yom Kippur War came the [Arab oil embargo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1973_oil_crisis) where the (Muslim) Persian Gulf oil-producing states' dramatic decision to cut back on production and quadruple the price of oil, made the terms oil, Arabs and Islam synonymous – with power – in the world, and especially in the Muslim world's public imagination. Many Muslims believe as Saudi Prince Saud al Faisal did that the hundreds of billions of dollars in wealth obtained from the Persian Gulf's huge oil deposits were nothing less than a gift from God to the Islamic faithful.
* As the [Islamic revival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_revival) gained momentum, governments such as Egypt's, which had previously repressed (and was still continuing to repress) Islamists, joined the bandwagon. They banned alcohol and flooded the airwaves with religious programming, giving the movement even more exposure.

**Saudi Arabian funding**

*See also:* [*Saudi Arabia and terrorism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia_and_terrorism)

Starting in the mid-1970s the Islamic resurgence was funded by an abundance of money from Saudi Arabian oil exports. The tens of billions of dollars in "[petro-Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petro-Islam)" largesse obtained from the recently heightened price of oil funded an estimated "90% of the expenses of the entire faith."

Throughout the Muslim world, religious institutions for people both young and old, from children's [maddrassas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madrasah) to high-level scholarships received Saudi funding, "books, scholarships, fellowships, and mosques" (for example, "more than 1500 [mosques](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosque) were built and paid for with money obtained from public Saudi funds over the last 50 years"), along with training in the Kingdom for the preachers and teachers who went on to teach and work at these universities, schools, mosques, etc.

The funding was also used to reward journalists and academics who followed the Saudis' strict interpretation of Islam; and satellite campuses were built around Egypt for [Al Azhar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Azhar), the world's oldest and most influential Islamic university.

The interpretation of Islam promoted by this funding was the strict, conservative Saudi-based [Wahhabism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahhabism) or [Salafism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salafism). In its harshest form it preached that Muslims should not only "always oppose" infidels "in every way," but "hate them for their religion ... for Allah's sake," that [democracy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy) "is responsible for all the horrible wars of the 20th century," that [Shia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shia) and other non-Wahhabi Muslims were [infidels](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostasy_in_Islam), etc. While this effort has by no means converted all, or even most Muslims to the Wahhabist interpretation of Islam, it has done much to overwhelm more moderate local interpretations, and has set the Saudi-interpretation of Islam as the "gold standard" of religion in minds of some or many Muslims.

**Grand Mosque seizure**

*Further information:* [*Grand Mosque seizure*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Mosque_seizure)

The strength of the Islamist movement was manifest in an event which might have seemed sure to turn Muslim public opinion against [fundamentalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamentalism), but did just the opposite. In 1979 the [Grand Mosque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masjid_al-Haram) in [Mecca](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca) [Saudi Arabia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia) was seized by an armed fundamentalist group and held for over a week. Scores were killed, including many pilgrim bystanders in a gross violation of one of the most holy sites in Islam (and one where arms and violence are strictly forbidden).

Instead of prompting a backlash against the movement from which the attackers originated, however, Saudi Arabia, already very conservative, responded by shoring up its fundamentalist credentials with even more Islamic restrictions. Crackdowns followed on everything from shopkeepers who did not close for prayer and newspapers that published pictures of women, to the selling of dolls, teddy bears (images of animate objects are considered [haraam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haraam)), and dog food (dogs are considered unclean).

In other Muslim countries, blame for and wrath against the seizure was directed not against fundamentalists, but against Islamic fundamentalism's foremost geopolitical enemy – the United States. Ayatollah [Khomeini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khomeini) sparked attacks on American embassies when he announced:

It is not beyond guessing that this is the work of criminal American imperialism and international Zionism

despite the fact that the object of the fundamentalists' revolt was the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, America's major ally in the region. Anti-American demonstrations followed in the [Philippines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippines), [Turkey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey), [Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh), [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), the [UAE](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UAE), [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan), and [Kuwait](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwait). The US Embassy in [Libya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libya) was burned by protesters chanting pro-Khomeini slogans and the embassy in [Islamabad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamabad), Pakistan was burned to the ground.

**Dissatisfaction with the status quo**

* The [Arab world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_world) – the original heart of the Muslim world – has been afflicted with [economic stagnation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_stagnation). For example, it has been estimated that in the mid-1990s the exports of [Finland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finland), a country of five million, exceeded those of the entire Arab world of 260 million, excluding oil revenue. This economic stagnation is argued to have commenced with the demise of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, with trade networks being disrupted and societies torn apart with the creation of new nation states; prior to this, the Middle East had a diverse and growing economy and more general prosperity.
* Strong population growth combined with economic stagnation has created urban conglomerations in [Cairo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cairo), [Istanbul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Istanbul), [Tehran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tehran), [Karachi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karachi), [Dhaka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhaka), and [Jakarta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakarta) each with well over 12 million citizens, millions of them young and unemployed or underemployed. Such a demographic, alienated from the [westernized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westernization) ways of the urban elite, but uprooted from the comforts and more passive traditions of the villages they came from, is understandably favorably disposed to an Islamic system promising a better world – an ideology providing an "emotionally familiar basis for group identity, solidarity, and exclusion; an acceptable basis for legitimacy and authority; an immediately intelligible formulation of principles for both a critique of the present and a program for the future."

**Charitable work**

Islamist movements such as the [Muslim Brotherhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood), "are well known for providing shelters, educational assistance, free or low cost medical clinics, housing assistance to students from out of town, student advisory groups, facilitation of inexpensive mass marriage ceremonies to avoid prohibitively costly dowry demands, legal assistance, sports facilities, and women's groups." All this compares very favorably against incompetent, inefficient, or neglectful governments whose commitment to social justice is limited to rhetoric.

**Power of identity politics**

Islamism can also be described as part of [identity politics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identity_politics), specifically the religiously-oriented nationalism that emerged in the Third World in the 1970s: "[resurgent Hinduism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_nationalism) in [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), [Religious Zionism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_Zionism) in [Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel), [militant Buddhism in Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origins_of_the_Sri_Lankan_civil_war), resurgent [Sikh nationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jarnail_Singh_Bhindranwale) in the [Punjab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab_region), '[Liberation Theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberation_Theology)' of [Catholicism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholicism) in [Latin America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_America), and of course, Islamism in the Muslim world." These all challenged Westernized ruling elites on behalf of 'authenticity' and tradition.

**Criticism**

Main article: [Criticism of Islamism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_Islamism)

Islamism, or elements of Islamism, have been criticized for: repression of free expression and individual rights, rigidity, hypocrisy, lack of true understanding of Islam, misinterpreting the [Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) and [Sunnah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunnah), [antisemitism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antisemitism), and for innovations to Islam ([bid‘ah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bid%E2%80%98ah)), notwithstanding Islamists' proclaimed opposition to any such innovation.

**History**

**Predecessor movements**

Some Islamic revivalist movements and leaders pre-dating Islamism include:

* Shaikh [Ahmad Sirhindi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmad_Sirhindi) (~1564–1624) was part of "a reassertion of orthodoxy within [Sufism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sufism)" and was known to his followers as the 'renovator of the second millennium'. It has been said of Sirhindi that he 'gave to Indian Islam the rigid and conservative stamp it bears today.'
* [Ibn Taymiyyah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Taymiyyah), a Syrian Islamic jurist during the 13th and 14th centuries who is often quoted by contemporary Islamists. Ibn Taymiyya argued against the shirking of [Sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia) law, and against practices such as the celebration of Muhammad's birthday or the construction of mosques around the tombs of Sufi sheikhs, believing that these were unacceptable borrowings from Christianity.'
* Shah Waliullah of India and [Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Abd-al-Wahhab) of Arabia were contemporaries who met each other while studying in [Mecca](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca). [Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Abd-al-Wahhab) advocated doing away with the later accretions like grave worship and getting back to the letter and the spirit of Islam as preached and practiced by [Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad). He went on to found [Wahhabism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahhabism). Shah Waliullah was a forerunner of reformist Islamists like [Muhammad Abduh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Abduh), [Muhammad Iqbal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Iqbal) and [Muhammad Asad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Asad) in his belief that there was "a constant need for new [ijtihad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ijtihad) as the Muslim community progressed and expanded and new generations had to cope with new problems" and in his interest in the social and economic problems of the poor.
* [Sayyid Ahmad Barelvi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayyid_Ahmad_Barelvi) was a disciple and successor of Shah Waliullah's son and emphasized the 'purification' of Islam from un-Islamic beliefs and practices. He anticipated modern militant Islamists by leading an [extremist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_extremism), [jihadist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihadist) movement and attempted to create an Islamic state with enforcement of Islamic law. While he battled [Sikh fundamentalist rule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikh_Empire) in Muslim-majority North-Western India, his followers fought against [British colonialism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj) after his death and allied themselves with the [Indian Mutiny](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Mutiny).
* After the failure of the Indian Mutiny some of Shah Waliullah's followers turned to more peaceful methods of preserving the Islamic heritage and founded the [Dar al-Ulum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dar_al-Ulum) seminary in 1867 in the town of [Deoband](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deoband). From the school developed the [Deobandi movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deobandi) which became the largest [philosophical movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophical_movement) of traditional Islamic thought in the subcontinent and led to the establishment of thousands of [madrasahs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madrasah) throughout modern-day [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan) and [Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh).

**Early history**



[Jamal-al-Din al-Afghani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamal-al-Din_al-Afghani)

The end of the 19th century saw the dismemberment of most of the Muslim [Ottoman Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) by non-Muslim European colonial powers. The empire spent massive sums on Western civilian and military technology to try to modernize and compete with the encroaching European powers, and in the process went deep into debt to these powers.

In this context, the publications of Jamal ad-din [al-Afghani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Afghani) (1837–97), [Muhammad Abduh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Abduh) (1849–1905) and [Rashid Rida](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashid_Rida) (1865–1935) preached Islamic alternatives to the political, economic, and cultural decline of the empire. Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida formed the beginning of the Islamist movement, as well as the reformist Islamist movement.

Their ideas included the creation of a truly Islamic society under sharia law, and the rejection of [taqlid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taqlid), the blind imitation of earlier authorities, which they believed deviated from the true messages of Islam. Unlike some later Islamists, [Early Salafiyya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_modernism) strongly emphasized the restoration of the [Caliphate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliphate).

**Muhammad Iqbal**

*See also:* [*Two-Nation Theory*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two-Nation_Theory)

[Muhammad Iqbal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Iqbal) was a [philosopher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosopher), [poet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poet) and [politician](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politician) in [British India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj) who is widely regarded as having inspired the [Islamic Nationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two-Nation_Theory) and [Pakistan Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan_Movement) in [British India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_India). Iqbal is admired as a prominent classical poet by [Pakistani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistani), [Iranian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_peoples), [Indian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) and other international scholars of literature. Though Iqbal is best known as an eminent poet, he is also a highly acclaimed "Islamic philosophical thinker of modern times".

While studying law and philosophy in [England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England) and [Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany), Iqbal became a member of the [London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London) branch of the [All India Muslim League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_India_Muslim_League). He came back to [Lahore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lahore) in 1908. While dividing his time between law practice and philosophical poetry, Iqbal had remained active in the Muslim League. He did not support Indian involvement in [World War I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I) and remained in close touch with Muslim political leaders such as [Muhammad Ali Johar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maulana_Mohammad_Ali) and [Muhammad Ali Jinnah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Ali_Jinnah). He was a critic of the mainstream [Indian nationalist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Nationalism) and [secularist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism) [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress). Iqbal's seven English lectures were published by [Oxford University press](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxford_University_press) in 1934 in a book titled [The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Reconstruction_of_Religious_Thought_in_Islam). These lectures dwell on the role of Islam as a religion as well as a political and legal philosophy in the modern age.

Iqbal expressed fears that not only would [secularism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism) and secular [nationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalism) weaken the spiritual foundations of [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) and [Muslim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim) society, but that India's [Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu)-majority population would crowd out Muslim heritage, [culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture) and political influence. In his travels to [Egypt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt), [Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan), [Palestine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine) and [Syria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria), he promoted ideas of [greater Islamic political co-operation and unity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan-Islamism), calling for the shedding of nationalist differences. Sir Muhammad Iqbal was elected president of the Muslim League in 1930 at its session in [Allahabad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allahabad) as well as for the session in [Lahore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lahore) in 1932. In his [Allahabad Address](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allahabad_Address) on 29 December 1930, Iqbal outlined a vision of an independent state for Muslim-majority provinces in northwestern India. This address later inspired the [Pakistan movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan_movement).

The thoughts and vision of Iqbal later influenced many [reformist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformism) Islamists, e.g., [Muhammad Asad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Asad), [Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayyid_Abul_Ala_Maududi) and [Ali Shariati](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Shariati).

**Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi**

Main article: [Abul Ala Maududi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abul_Ala_Maududi)

[Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayyid_Abul_Ala_Maududi) was an important early twentieth-century figure in the Islamic revival in [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), and then after independence from [Britain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom), in [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan). Trained as a lawyer he chose the profession of journalism, and wrote about contemporary issues and most importantly about Islam and Islamic law. Maududi founded the [Jamaat-e-Islami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamaat-e-Islami_Pakistan) party in 1941 and remained its leader until 1972. However, Maududi had much more impact through his writing than through his political organizing. His extremely influential books (translated into many languages) placed Islam in a modern context, and influenced not only conservative [ulema](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulema) but liberal modernizer Islamists such as [al-Faruqi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Faruqi), whose "[Islamization of Knowledge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamization_of_Knowledge)" carried forward some of Maududi's key principles.

Maududi believed that Islam was all-encompassing: "Everything in the universe is 'Muslim' for it obeys God by submission to His laws... The man who denies God is called [Kafir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kafir) (concealer) because he conceals by his disbelief what is inherent in his nature and embalmed in his own soul."

Maududi also believed that Muslim society could not be Islamic without Sharia, and Islam required the establishment of an Islamic state. This state should be a "theo-democracy," based on the principles of: [*tawhid*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tawhid) (unity of God), [*risala*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risala) (prophethood) and [*khilafa*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khilafa) (caliphate). Although Maududi talked about Islamic revolution, by "revolution" he meant not the violence or populist policies of the [Iranian Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_Revolution), but the gradual changing the hearts and minds of individuals from the top of society downward through an educational process or *da'wah*.

**Muslim Brotherhood**

Main article: [Muslim Brotherhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood)

Roughly contemporaneous with Maududi was the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood in Ismailiyah, Egypt in 1928 by [Hassan al Banna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hassan_al_Banna). His was arguably the first, largest and most influential modern Islamic political/religious organization. Under the motto "the Qur'an is our constitution," it sought Islamic revival through preaching and also by providing basic community services including schools, mosques, and workshops. Like Maududi, Al Banna believed in the necessity of government rule based on [Shariah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shariah) law implemented gradually and by persuasion, and of eliminating all imperialist influence in the Muslim world.

Some elements of the Brotherhood, though perhaps against orders, did engage in violence against the government, and its founder [Al-Banna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hassan_al_Banna) was assassinated in 1949 in retaliation for the assassination of Egypt's premier Mahmud Fami Naqrashi three months earlier. The Brotherhood has suffered periodic repression in Egypt and has been banned several times, in 1948 and several years later following confrontations with Egyptian president [Gamal Abdul Nasser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamal_Abdul_Nasser), who jailed thousands of members for several years.

Despite periodic repression, the Brotherhood has become one of the most influential movements in the [Islamic world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_world), particularly in the [Arab world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_world). For many years it was described as "semi-legal" and was the only opposition group in Egypt able to field candidates during elections. In the [Egyptian parliamentary election, 2011–2012](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_parliamentary_election,_2011%E2%80%932012), the political parties identified as "Islamist" (the Brotherhood's [Freedom and Justice Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_and_Justice_Party_(Egypt)), Salafi [Al-Nour Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Nour_Party) and liberal Islamist [Al-Wasat Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Wasat_Party)) won 75% of the total seats. [Mohamed Morsi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohamed_Morsi), an Islamist democrat of [Muslim Brotherhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood), was the first democratically elected president of [Egypt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt). He was deposed during the [2013 Egyptian coup d'état](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013_Egyptian_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat).

**Sayyid Qutb**



[Sayyid Qutb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayyid_Qutb)

Main article: [Sayyid Qutb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayyid_Qutb)

*See also:* [*Qutbism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qutbism) *and* [*Ma'alim fi-l-Tariq*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ma%27alim_fi-l-Tariq)

Maududi's political ideas influenced [Sayyid Qutb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayyid_Qutb), a leading member of the [Muslim Brotherhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood) movement, and one of the key philosophers of Islamism and highly influential thinkers of Islamic universalism. Qutb believed things had reached such a state that the Muslim community had literally ceased to exist. It "has been extinct for a few centuries," having reverted to Godless ignorance ([Jahiliyya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jahiliyya)).

To eliminate jahiliyya, Qutb argued [Sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia), or Islamic law, must be established. Sharia law was not only accessible to humans and essential to the existence of [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam), but also all-encompassing, precluding "evil and corrupt" non-Islamic ideologies like communism, nationalism, or secular democracy.

Qutb preached that Muslims must engage in a two-pronged attack of converting individuals through [preaching Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dawah) peacefully and also waging what he called [militant jihad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offensive_jihad) so as to forcibly eliminate the "power structures" of Jahiliyya – not only from the Islamic homeland but from the face of the earth.

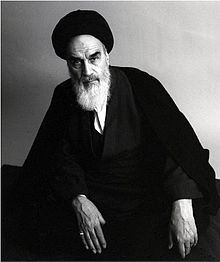
Qutb was both a member of the brotherhood and enormously influential in the Muslim world at large. Qutb is considered by some (Fawaz A. Gerges) to be "the founding father and leading theoretician" of modern jihadists, such as [Osama bin Laden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden). However, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and in Europe has not embraced his vision of undemocratic [Islamic state](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_state) and armed jihad, something for which they have been denounced by radical Islamists.

**Six-Day War (1967)**

Main article: [Six-Day War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-Day_War)

The quick and decisive defeat of the Arab troops during the Six-Day War by Israeli troops constituted a pivotal event in the Arab Muslim world. The defeat along with economic stagnation in the defeated countries, was blamed on the secular [Arab nationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_nationalism) of the ruling regimes. A steep and steady decline in the popularity and credibility of secular, socialist and nationalist politics ensued. [Ba'athism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ba%27athism), [Arab socialism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_socialism), and [Arab nationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_nationalism) suffered, and different democratic and anti-democratic Islamist movements inspired by [Maududi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maududi) and [Sayyid Qutb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayyid_Qutb) gained ground.

**Islamic Republic in Iran**



[Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayatollah_Ruhollah_Khomeini)

Main article: [History of fundamentalist Islam in Iran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_fundamentalist_Islam_in_Iran)

*See also:* [*Iranian Revolution*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_Revolution) *and* [*Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guardianship_of_the_Islamic_Jurists)

The first modern "Islamist state" (with the possible exception of Zia's [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan)) was established among the [Shia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shia) of [Iran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran). In a major shock to the rest of the world, [Ayatollah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayatollah) [Ruhollah Khomeini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruhollah_Khomeini) led the Iranian Revolution of 1979 to overthrow the oil-rich, well-armed, Westernized and pro-American secular monarchy ruled by Shah [Muhammad Reza Pahlavi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Reza_Pahlavi).

The views of [Ali Shariati](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Shariati), ideologue of the [Iranian Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_Revolution), had resemblance with [Mohammad Iqbal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammad_Iqbal), ideological father of the [State of Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_of_Pakistan), but Khomeini's beliefs were placed somewhere between beliefs of Sunni Islamic thinkers like Mawdudi and Qutb: He believed that complete imitation of the early Muslims for restoration of [Sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia) law was essential to Islam, that secular, Westernizing Muslims were actually agents of the West serving Western interests, and that the "plundering" of Muslim lands was part of a long-term conspiracy against Islam by the Christian West.

But they also differed:

* As a [Shia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shia), Khomeini looked to [Ali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali) ibn Abī Tālib and [Husayn ibn Ali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Husayn_ibn_Ali) Imam, but not Caliphs [Abu Bakr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr), [Omar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umar) or [Uthman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uthman).
* Khomeini talked not about restoring the [Caliphate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliphate) or [Sunni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunni) [Islamic democracy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_democracy), but about establishing a state where the role of guardianship of democratic or dictatorial political system was taken by Shia jurists ([*ulama*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulama)) as the successors of [Shia Imams](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imamah_(Shi%27a_twelver_doctrine)) until the [Mahdi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_al-Mahdi) returned from occultation. His concept of [*velayat-e-faqih*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Velayat-e-faqih) ("guardianship of the [Islamic] jurist"), held that the leading Shia Muslim cleric in society – which Khomeini and his followers believed to be himself – should serve as supervisor of state in order to protect or "guard" Islam and *Sharia* law from "innovation" and "anti-Islamic laws" passed by dictators or democratic parliaments.
* The revolution was influenced by [Marxism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism) through Islamist thought and also by writings that sought either to counter Marxism ([Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Baqir_al-Sadr)'s work) or to integrate socialism and Islamism ([Ali Shariati](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Shariati)'s work). A strong wing of the revolutionary leadership was made up of leftists or "radical populists", such as [Ali Akbar Mohtashami-Pur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Akbar_Mohtashami-Pur).

While initial enthusiasm for the Iranian revolution in the Muslim world was intense, it has waned as "purges, executions, and atrocities tarnished its image".

The Islamic Republic has also maintained its hold on power in Iran in spite of [US economic sanctions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States-Iran_relations), and has created or assisted like-minded Shia terrorist groups in Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Jordan ([SCIRI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SCIRI)) and Lebanon ([Hezbollah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hezbollah)) (two Muslim countries that also have large Shiite populations). During the [2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_Israel-Lebanon_conflict), the Iranian government enjoyed something of a resurgence in popularity amongst the predominantly Sunni "[Arab street](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_street)," due to its support for [Hezbollah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hezbollah) and to President [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahmoud_Ahmadinejad)'s vehement opposition to the United States and his call that [Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel) shall vanish.

**Afghanistan**

In 1979, the [Soviet Union deployed its 40th Army into Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_invasion_of_Afghanistan), attempting to suppress an Islamic rebellion against an allied Marxist regime in the [Afghan Civil War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(1978%E2%80%93present)). The conflict, pitting indigenous impoverished Muslims ([mujahideen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujahideen)) against an anti-religious superpower, galvanized thousands of Muslims around the world to send aid and sometimes to go themselves to fight for their faith. Leading this pan-Islamic effort was Palestinian sheikh [Abdullah Yusuf Azzam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdullah_Yusuf_Azzam#Life_in_Pakistan_and_Afghanistan). While the military effectiveness of these "[Afghan Arabs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_Arabs)" was marginal, an estimated 16,000 to 35,000 Muslim volunteers came from around the world came to fight in Afghanistan.

When the Soviet Union abandoned the Marxist Najibullah regime and withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 (the regime finally fell in 1992), the victory was seen by many Muslims as the triumph of Islamic faith over superior military power and technology that could be duplicated elsewhere.

The jihadists gained legitimacy and prestige from their triumph both within the militant community and among ordinary Muslims, as well as the confidence to carry their jihad to other countries where they believed Muslims required assistance.

The "veterans of the guerrilla campaign" returning home to [Algeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algeria), [Egypt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt), and other countries "with their experience, ideology, and weapons," were often eager to continue armed jihad.

The collapse of the Soviet Union itself, in 1991, was seen by many Islamists, including Bin Laden, as the defeat of a superpower at the hands of Islam. Concerning the $6 billion in aid given by the US and Pakistan's military training and intelligence support to the mujahideen, bin Laden wrote: "The US has no mentionable role" in "the collapse of the Soviet Union ... rather the credit goes to God and the mujahidin" of Afghanistan.

**Persian Gulf War**

Another factor in the early 1990s that worked to radicalize the Islamist movement was the [Gulf War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War), which brought several hundred thousand US and allied non-Muslim military personnel to Saudi Arabian soil to put an end to [Saddam Hussein](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saddam_Hussein)'s occupation of Kuwait. Prior to 1990 Saudi Arabia played an important role in restraining the many Islamist groups that received its aid. But when Saddam, secularist and [Ba'athist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ba%27athism) dictator of neighboring [Iraq](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq), attacked Saudi Arabia (his enemy in the war), western troops came to protect the Saudi monarchy. Traditional Muslim belief holds that non-Muslim troops must not be allowed on the Arabian peninsula (including Saudi Arabia). Islamists accused the Saudi regime of being a puppet of the west.

These attacks resonated with conservative Muslims and the problem did not go away with Saddam's defeat either, since American troops remained stationed in the kingdom, and a de facto cooperation with the Palestinian-Israeli peace process developed. Saudi Arabia attempted to compensate for its loss of prestige among these groups by repressing those domestic Islamists who attacked it (bin Laden being a prime example), and increasing aid to Islamic groups (Islamist madrassas around the world and even aiding some violent Islamist groups) that did not, but its pre-war influence on behalf of moderation was greatly reduced. One result of this was a campaign of attacks on government officials and tourists in [Egypt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Gama%27a_al-Islamiyya), a bloody civil war in [Algeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Algerian_massacres_of_the_1990s) and [Osama bin Laden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden)'s terror attacks climaxing in the [9/11 attack](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11,_2001_attacks).

**Jihad movements of Egypt**

While Qutb's ideas became increasingly radical during his imprisonment prior to his execution in 1966, the leadership of the Brotherhood, led by [Hasan al-Hudaybi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasan_al-Hudaybi), remained moderate and interested in political negotiation and activism. Fringe or splinter movements inspired by the final writings of Qutb in the mid-1960s (particularly the manifesto *Milestones*, a.k.a. [*Ma'alim fi-l-Tariq*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ma%27alim_fi-l-Tariq)) did, however, develop and they pursued a more radical direction. By the 1970s, the Brotherhood had renounced violence as a means of achieving its goals.

The path of violence and military struggle was then taken up by the [Egyptian Islamic Jihad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_Islamic_Jihad) organization responsible for the assassination of [Anwar Sadat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anwar_Sadat) in 1981. Unlike earlier anti-colonial movements the [extremist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_extremism) group directed its attacks against what it believed were "apostate" leaders of Muslim states, leaders who held secular leanings or who had introduced or promoted Western/foreign ideas and practices into Islamic societies. Its views were outlined in a pamphlet written by Muhammad Abd al-Salaam Farag, in which he states:

...there is no doubt that the first battlefield for jihad is the extermination of these infidel leaders and to replace them by a complete Islamic Order...

Another of the Egyptian groups which employed violence in their struggle for Islamic order was [al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Gama%27a_al-Islamiyya) (Islamic Group). Victims of their campaign against the Egyptian state in the 1990s included the head of the counter-terrorism police (Major General Raouf Khayrat), a parliamentary speaker ([Rifaat al-Mahgoub](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rifaat_al-Mahgoub)), dozens of European tourists and Egyptian bystanders, and over 100 Egyptian police. Ultimately the campaign to overthrow the government was unsuccessful, and the major jihadi group, Jamaa Islamiya (or [al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Gama%27a_al-Islamiyya)), renounced violence in 2003. Other lesser known groups include the Islamic Liberation Party, [Salvation from Hell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_from_Hell) and [Takfir wal-Hijra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Takfir_wal-Hijra), and these groups have variously been involved in activities such as attempted assassinations of political figures, arson of video shops and attempted takeovers of government buildings.

**Hamas of Palestine**



The [Hamas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas) flag

[Hamas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas) is the Sunni Islamist organization of [**Palestine**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine) that governs the Gaza Strip with [Sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia) law. Hamas also has a military resistance wing, the [Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Izz_ad-Din_al-Qassam_Brigades).

For some decades prior to the [First Palestine Intifada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Intifada) in 1987, the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine took a "quiescent" stance towards Israel, focusing on preaching, education and social services, and benefiting from Israel's "indulgence" to build up a network of mosques and charitable organizations. As the First Intifada gathered momentum and Palestinian shopkeepers closed their shops in support of the uprising, the Brotherhood announced the formation of HAMAS ("zeal"), devoted to [Jihad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad) against Israel. Rather than being more moderate than the PLO, the 1988 [Hamas charter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas_Covenant) took a more uncompromising stand, calling for the destruction of Israel and the establishment of an Islamic state in Palestine. It was soon competing with and then overtaking the PLO for control of the intifada. The Brotherhood's base of devout middle class found common cause with the impoverished youth of the intifada in their cultural conservatism and antipathy for activities of the secular middle class such as drinking alcohol and going about without [hijab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijab).

Hamas has continued to be a major player in Palestine. From 2000 to 2007 it killed 542 people in 140 suicide bombing or “martyrdom operations”. In the January 2006 legislative election—its first foray into the political process—it won the majority of the seats, and in 2007 it [drove the PLO out of Gaza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Gaza_(2007)). Hamas has been praised by Muslims for driving Israel out of the [Gaza Strip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_Strip), but criticized for failure to achieve its demands in the [2008-9](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_War_(2008%E2%80%9309)) and [2014 Gaza Wars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_Israel%E2%80%93Gaza_conflict) despite heavy destruction and significant loss of life.

**Sudan and Turabi**

For many years, [Sudan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudan) had an Islamist regime under the leadership of [Hassan al-Turabi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hassan_al-Turabi). His [National Islamic Front](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Islamic_Front) first gained influence when strongman General [Gaafar al-Nimeiry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaafar_al-Nimeiry) invited members to serve in his government in 1979. Turabi built a powerful economic base with money from foreign Islamist banking systems, especially those linked with Saudi Arabia. He also recruited and built a cadre of influential loyalists by placing sympathetic students in the university and military academy while serving as minister of education.

After al-Nimeiry was overthrown in 1985 the party did poorly in national elections, but in 1989 it was able to overthrow the elected post-al-Nimeiry government with the help of the military. Turabi was noted for proclaiming his support for the democratic process and a liberal government before coming to power, but strict application of [sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia) law, torture and mass imprisonment of the opposition, and an intensification of the long-running war in southern Sudan, once in power. The NIF regime also harbored [Osama bin Laden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) for a time (before 9/11), and worked to unify Islamist opposition to the American attack on Iraq in the 1991 [Gulf War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War).

Main article: [National Islamic Front](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Islamic_Front)

After Sudanese intelligence services were implicated in an [assassination attempt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hosni_Mubarak#Assassination_attempt_in_Ethiopia) on the President of Egypt, UN economic sanctions were imposed on Sudan, a poor country, and Turabi fell from favor. He was imprisoned for a time in 2004-5. Some of the NIF policies, such as the war with the non-Muslim south, have been reversed, though the National Islamic Front still holds considerable power in the government of [Omar al-Bashir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_al-Bashir) and [National Congress Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Congress_(Sudan)), another Islamist party in country.

**Algeria**

*See also:* [*Algerian Civil War*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algerian_Civil_War) *and* [*List of Algerian massacres of the 1990s*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Algerian_massacres_of_the_1990s)



The [FIS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Salvation_Front) emblem

An Islamist movement influenced by Salafism and the jihad in Afghanistan, as well as the [Muslim Brotherhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood), was the FIS or Front Islamique de Salut (the [Islamic Salvation Front](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Salvation_Front)) in Algeria. Founded as a broad Islamist coalition in 1989 it was led by [Abbassi Madani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbassi_Madani), and a charismatic Islamist young preacher, [Ali Belhadj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Belhadj). Taking advantage of economic failure and unpopular social liberalization and secularization by the ruling leftist-nationalist FLN government, it used its preaching to advocate the establishment of a legal system following [Sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia) law, economic liberalization and development program, education in Arabic rather than French, and gender segregation, with women staying home to alleviate the high rate of unemployment among young Algerian men. The FIS won sweeping victories in local elections and it was going to win national elections in 1991 when voting was canceled by a military coup d'état.

As Islamists took up arms to overthrow the government, the FIS's leaders were arrested and it became overshadowed by Islamist guerrilla groups, particularly the [Islamic Salvation Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Salvation_Army), MIA and [Armed Islamic Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Islamic_Group) (or GIA). A bloody and devastating [civil war](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algerian_Civil_War) ensued in which between 150,000 and 200,000 people were killed over the next decade.

The civil war was not a victory for Islamists. By 2002 the main guerrilla groups had either been destroyed or had surrendered. The popularity of Islamist parties has declined to the point that "the Islamist candidate, Abdallah Jaballah, came a distant third with 5% of the vote" in the 2004 presidential election.

**Taliban in Afghanistan**



Flag of the [Taliban](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban)

Main article: [Taliban](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban)

In Afghanistan, the mujahideen's victory against the [Soviet Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) in the 1980s did not lead to justice and prosperity, due to a vicious and destructive [civil war](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(1978%E2%80%93present)) between political and tribal warlords, making Afghanistan one of the poorest countries on earth. In 1992, the [Democratic Republic of Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Republic_of_Afghanistan) ruled by communist forces collapsed, and [democratic Islamist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_democracy) elements of mujahdeen founded the [Islamic State of Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Afghanistan). In 1996, a more conservative and anti-democratic Islamist movement known as the [Taliban](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban) rose to power, defeated most of the warlords and took over roughly 80% of Afghanistan.

The Taliban were spawned by the thousands of [madrasahs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madrasah) the [Deobandi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deobandi) movement established for impoverished [Afghan refugees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_refugees) and supported by governmental and religious groups in neighboring Pakistan. The Taliban differed from other Islamist movements to the point where they might be more properly described as [Islamic fundamentalist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_fundamentalism) or neofundamentalist, interested in spreading "an idealized and systematized version of conservative tribal village customs" under the label of [Sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia) to an entire country. Their ideology was also described as being influenced by [Wahhabism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahhabism), and the [extremist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_extremism) [jihadism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihadism) of their guest [Osama bin Laden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden).

The Taliban considered "politics" to be against [Sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia) and thus did not hold elections. They were led by Mullah [Mohammed Omar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammed_Omar) who was given the title "[Amir al-Mu'minin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amir_al-Mu%27minin)" or Commander of the Faithful, and a pledge of loyalty by several hundred Taliban-selected [Pashtun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pashtun_people) clergy in April 1996. Taliban were overwhelmingly Pashtun and were accused of not sharing power with the approximately 60% of Afghans who belonged to other ethnic groups. (see: [Taliban#Ideology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban#Ideology))

The Taliban's hosting of [Osama bin Laden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) led to an American-organized attack which drove them from power following the [9/11 attacks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9/11_attacks). Taliban are still very much alive and fighting a vigorous [insurgency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban#Resurgence) with suicide bombings and armed attacks being launched against [NATO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO) and Afghan government targets.

**Bangladesh**



[Shah Ahmad Shafi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shah_Ahmad_Shafi) of [Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hefazat-e-Islam_Bangladesh).

Currently, the [Bangladesh Nationalist Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh_Nationalist_Party) is the second largest party in the Parliament of [Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh) and the main opposition party, followed by [Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamaat-e-Islami_Bangladesh). The BNP promotes a [center-right](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Center-right) policy combining elements of conservatism, Islamism, nationalism and anti-communism. Since 2000, it has been allied with the Islamic parties [Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamaat-e-Islami_Bangladesh), and, [Islami Oikya Jote](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islami_Oikya_Jote).

**Pakistan**

*See also:* [*Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zia-ul-Haq%27s_Islamization) *and* [*Objectives Resolution*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectives_Resolution)

Early in the history of the state of Pakistan (12 March 1949), a parliamentary resolution (the [Objectives Resolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectives_Resolution)) was adopted in accordance with the [vision](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two_nation_theory) of founding fathers of [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan_Movement) ([Muhammad Iqbal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Iqbal), [Muhammad Ali Jinnah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Ali_Jinnah), [Liaquat Ali Khan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liaquat_Ali_Khan)). proclaiming:

[Sovereignty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereignty) belongs to [Allah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allah) alone but He has delegated it to the State of Pakistan through its people for being exercised within the limits prescribed by Him as a sacred trust.

* The State shall exercise its powers and authority through the elected representatives of the people.
* The principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice, as enunciated by Islam, shall be fully observed.
* Muslims shall be enabled to order their lives in the individual and collective spheres in accordance with the teachings of Islam as set out in the Quran and Sunnah.
* Provision shall be made for the religious minorities to freely profess and practice their religions and develop their cultures.

This resolution later became a key source of inspiration for writers of the [Constitution of Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_Pakistan), and is included in the constitution as preamble.

In July 1977, General [Zia-ul-Haq](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zia-ul-Haq) overthrew Prime Minister [Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zulfiqar_Ali_Bhutto)'s regime in Pakistan. Ali Bhutto, a leftist in democratic competition with Islamists, had announced banning alcohol and nightclubs within six months, shortly before he was overthrown. Zia-ul-Haq was much more committed to Islamism, and "[Islamization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zia-ul-Haq%27s_Islamization)" or implementation of Islamic law, became a cornerstone of his eleven-year military dictatorship and Islamism became his "official state ideology". Zia ul Haq was an admirer of [Mawdudi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mawdudi) and Mawdudi's party [Jamaat-e-Islami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamaat-e-Islami_Pakistan) became the "regime's ideological and political arm". In Pakistan this Islamization from above was "probably" more complete "than under any other regime except those in Iran and Sudan," but Zia-ul-Haq was also criticized by many Islamists for imposing "symbols" rather than substance, and using Islamization to legitimize his means of seizing power. Unlike neighboring Iran, Zia-ul-Haq's policies were intended to "avoid revolutionary excess", and not to strain relations with his American and Persian Gulf state allies. Zia-ul-Haq was killed in 1988 but Islamization remains an important element in Pakistani society.

**Turkey**

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|  | The [**neutrality**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Neutral_point_of_view) **of this section is** [**disputed**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:NPOV_dispute). Relevant discussion may be found on the [talk page](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Islamism#.23). Please do not remove this message until the [dispute is resolved](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:NPOV_dispute#What_is_an_NPOV_dispute.3F). *(July 2013)* |



[Necmettin Erbakan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Necmettin_Erbakan), was the first Islamist Prime Minister of Turkey elected in 1996, but was removed from power by a ["postmodern coup d'état"](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1997_military_memorandum_(Turkey)) in 1997.

[Turkey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey) had a number of Islamist parties, often changing names as they were banned by the constitutional court for anti-secular activities. [Necmettin Erbakan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Necmettin_Erbakan) (1926-2011) was the leader of several of the parties, the [National Order Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Order_Party) (*Milli Nizam Partisi*, 1970-1971), the [National Salvation Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Salvation_Party) (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, 1972-1981), and the [Welfare Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Welfare_Party) (*Refah Partisi*, 1983-1998); he also became a member of the [Felicity Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felicity_Party) (*Saadet Partisi*, 2003-2011).

The [Justice and Development Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_and_Development_Party_(Turkey)) (AKP), which has dominated Turkish politics from 2002 to 2015, is sometimes described as Islamist, but rejects such labelling.

[Ismet Özel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ismet_%C3%96zel), a prominent Islamist intellectual, argued that [Mustafa Kemal Atatürk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mustafa_Kemal_Atat%C3%BCrk)'s secular authoritarian policy, ironically, Islamicized the Turkish nation by forcing people to internalize and value their religious identity and not simply to take it for granted as in the past.

**Other countries**

* Various Islamist political groups are dominant forces in the political systems of [**Afghanistan**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan), [**Iran**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran) and [**Iraq**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq).
* The [Green Algeria Alliance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Algeria_Alliance) is an Islamist coalition of political parties, created for the [legislative election of 2012](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algerian_legislative_election,_2012) in [**Algeria**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algeria). It consists of the [Movement of Society for Peace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Movement_of_Society_for_Peace) (Hamas), [Islamic Renaissance Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Renaissance_Movement) (Ennahda) and the [Movement for National Reform](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Movement_for_National_Reform) (Islah). The alliance is led by [Bouguerra Soltani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bouguerra_Soltani) of Hamas. However, the incumbent coalition, consisting of the [FLN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Liberation_Front_(Algeria)) of President [Abdelaziz Bouteflika](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdelaziz_Bouteflika) and the [RND](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Rally_for_Democracy_(Algeria)) of Prime Minister [Ahmed Ouyahia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmed_Ouyahia), held on to power after winning a majority of seats, and the Islamist parties of the [Green Algeria Alliance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Algeria_Alliance) lost seats in the legislative election of 2012.
* Shia Islamist [Al Wefaq](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Wefaq), Salafi Islamist [Al Asalah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Asalah) and Sunni Islamist [Al-Menbar Islamic Society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Menbar_Islamic_Society) are dominant democratic forces in [**Bahrain**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahrain).
* The [Party of Democratic Action](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Party_of_Democratic_Action) is the largest political party in [**Bosnia and Herzegovina**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina). It was founded in May 1990 by reformist Islamist [Alija Izetbegović](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alija_Izetbegovi%C4%87), representing the conservative Bosniaks and other Slavic Muslim population in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia.
* [Nahdlatul Ulama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahdlatul_Ulama) and [Muhammadiyah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammadiyah) are two influential Islamist social movements in [**Indonesia**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia). The [National Awakening Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Awakening_Party), [United Development Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Development_Party) and [Prosperous Justice Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosperous_Justice_Party) are major Indonesian Islamist parties in the country's democratic process.
* [Islamic Action Front](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Action_Front) is [**Jordan**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan)**'**s Islamist political party and largest democratic political force in the country. The IAF's survival in Jordan is primarily due to its flexibility and less radical approach to politics.
* [Hadas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadas) or "Islamic Constitutional Movement" is [**Kuwait**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwait)**'**s [Sunni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunni) Islamist party.
* [Islamic Group (Lebanon)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Group_(Lebanon)) is a Sunni Islamist political party in [**Lebanon**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon). [Hezbollah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hezbollah) is a Shia Islamist political party in Lebanon.
* The [Justice and Construction Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_and_Construction_Party) is the [Muslim Brotherhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood)'s political arm in [**Libya**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libya) and the second largest political force in the country. The [National Forces Alliance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Forces_Alliance), the largest political group in country, doesn't believe the country should be run entirely by Sharia law or [secular](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secular) law, but does hold that [Sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia) should be "the main inspiration for legislation." Party leader Jibril has said the NFA is a moderate Islamic movement that recognizes the importance of [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) in political life and favors Sharia as the basis of the law.
* The [United Malays National Organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Malays_National_Organisation) is the dominant party of [**Malaysia**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysia) since the county's independence in 1957. The UMNO sees and defines itself as a moderate Islamist, Islamic democratic and [social conservative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_conservative) party of Muslim [Malays](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_Malays). The [Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan-Malaysian_Islamic_Party) is a major [opposition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opposition_(politics)) party which is relatively more conservative and traditionalist than the UMNO.
* The [Justice and Development Party (Morocco)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_and_Development_Party_(Morocco)) is the ruling party in [**Morocco**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morocco) since 29 November 2011, advocating Islamism and Islamic democracy.
* The [Muslim Brotherhood of Syria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood_of_Syria) is a Sunni Islamist force in [**Syria**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria) and very loosely affiliated to the Egyptian [Muslim Brotherhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood). It has also been called the "dominant group" or "dominant force" in the [Arab Spring](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Spring) uprising in Syria. The group's stated political positions are moderate and in its most recent April 2012 manifesto it "pledges to respect individual rights", to promote pluralism and democracy.
* The [Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Renaissance_Party_of_Tajikistan) is [**Tajikistan**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tajikistan)**'**s Islamist party and main opposition and democratic force in the country.
* The [Ennahda Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ennahda_Movement), also known as Renaissance Party or simply Ennahda, is a moderate Islamist political party in [**Tunisia**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunisia). On 1 March 2011, after the government of [Zine El Abidine Ben Ali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zine_El_Abidine_Ben_Ali) collapsed in the wake of the 2011 [Tunisian revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunisian_revolution), Tunisia's interim government granted the group permission to form a political party. Since then it has become the biggest and most well-organized party in Tunisia, so far outdistancing its more secular competitors. In the [Tunisian Constituent Assembly election of 2011](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunisian_Constituent_Assembly_election,_2011), the first honest election in the country's history with a turnout of 51.1% of all eligible voters, the party won 37.04% of the popular vote and 89 (41%) of the 217 assembly seats, far more than any other party.

**Hizb ut-Tahrir**

Main article: [Hizb ut-Tahrir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hizb_ut-Tahrir)

[Hizb ut-Tahrir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hizb_ut-Tahrir) is an influential international Islamist movement, founded in 1953 by an Islamic [Qadi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qadi) *(judge)* [Taqiuddin al-Nabhani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taqiuddin_al-Nabhani). HT is unique from most other Islamist movements in that the party focuses not on implementation of [Sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia) on local level or on providing social services, but on unifying the Muslim world under its vision of a new Islamic [caliphate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliphate) spanning from North Africa and the Middle East to much of central and South Asia.

To this end it has drawn up and published a constitution for its proposed caliphate state. The constitution's 187 articles specify specific policies such as [sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia) law, a "unitary ruling system" headed by a caliph elected by Muslims, an economy based on the [gold standard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gold_standard), public ownership of utilities, public transport, and energy resources, and [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic) as the "sole language of the State."

In its focus on the Caliphate, HT takes a different view of Muslim history than some other Islamists such as [Muhammad Qutb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Qutb). HT sees Islam's pivotal turning point as occurring not with the death of [Ali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali), or one of the other four [rightly guided Caliphs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashidun) in the 7th century, but with the [abolition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliph#Abolition_of_the_institution) of the [Ottoman Caliphate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Caliphate) in 1924. This is believed to have ended the true Islamic system, something for which it blames "the disbelieving (Kafir) colonial powers" working through Turkish modernist [Mustafa Kemal Atatürk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mustafa_Kemal_Atat%C3%BCrk).

HT does not engage in armed [jihad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad) or a democratic system, but works to take power through "ideological struggle" to change Muslim public opinion, and in particular through elites who will "facilitate" a "change of the government," i.e., launch a bloodless [coup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coup_d%27%C3%A9tat). It allegedly attempted and failed such coups in 1968 and 1969 in [Jordan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan), and in 1974 in [Egypt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt), and is now banned in both countries. But many HT members have gone on to join terrorist groups and many jihadi terrorists have cited HT as their key influence.

The party is sometimes described as "Leninist" and "rigidly controlled by its central leadership," with its estimated one million members required to spend "at least two years studying party literature under the guidance of mentors *(*[*Murshid*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murshid)*)*" before taking "the party oath." HT is particularly active in the ex-soviet republics of [Central Asia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Asia) and in [Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe).

In the [UK](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) its rallies have drawn thousands of Muslims, and the party has been described by two observers (Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke) to have outpaced the Muslim Brotherhood in both membership and radicalism.

**London**

Main article: [Londonistan (term)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Londonistan_(term))

[Greater London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_London) has over 900,000 [Muslims](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim), (most of South Asian origins and concentrated in the [East London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_End_of_London) boroughs of [Newham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Borough_of_Newham), [Tower Hamlets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Borough_of_Tower_Hamlets) and [Waltham Forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waltham_Forest)), and among them are some with a strong Islamist outlook. Their presence, combined with a perceived British policy of allowing them free rein, heightened by exposés such as the 2007 Channel 4 documentary program [*Undercover Mosque*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Undercover_Mosque), has given rise to the term [Londonistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Londonistan_(term)). Following the 9/11 attacks, however, [Abu Hamza al-Masri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Hamza_al-Masri), the [imam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imam_(Sunni_Islam)) of the [Finsbury Park Mosque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finsbury_Park_Mosque), was arrested and charged with incitement to terrorism which has caused many Islamists to leave the UK to avoid internment.

**Counter-response**

The U.S. government has engaged in efforts to counter Islamism, or violent Islamism, since 2001. These efforts were centered in the U.S. around [public diplomacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_diplomacy) programs conducted by the State Department. There have been calls to create an independent agency in the U.S. with a specific mission of undermining Islamism and jihadism. Christian Whiton, an official in the [George W. Bush administration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush_administration), called for a new agency focused on the nonviolent practice of "political warfare" aimed at undermining the ideology. U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates called for establishing something similar to the defunct [U.S. Information Agency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Information_Agency), which was charged with undermining the communist ideology during the [Cold War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War).

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