Islamic Terrorism

- Scholars agree that **terrorism is a disputed term**.
- It is common for opponents in a violent conflict to describe the other side as terrorists or as practicing terrorism.
- If you go back in history, you can hardly any association between Islam and terrorism until recent years.
- The earliest incident in modern time that is now labeled Islamic terrorism and was not labeled as such at the time was in 1968 when members of the "Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine" hijacked an Israeli flight from Rome that was headed to Tel Aviv and redirected it to Algeria.
- The interesting thing is the leader of this Palestinian organization at the time was "George Habash", a Christian Palestinian. Despite that it is now being lableled as the works of Islamic terrorists.
- Most of the so called "Islamic terrorism" acts that followed were directed towards Israeli targets as a part of the Palestinian-Israeli "conflict". American entities were targeted as well as a sign of resentment of the US foreign policy in support of Israel.
- The question that we would like to raise here for those who claim that Islam and its Qur'anic teachings are behind these "terrorists acts" is how is it in the previous 14+ centuries of Islam Muslims did not use "Islamic terrorism to advance their cause.
- Did the nowadays Muslims just discover their religion and deciphered coded verses in the Quran that their predecessors were unable to understand?
- The truth is that what is being referred to as "Islamic terrorism" mostly violent reactions of oppressed people who have no "state power" to use to counter oppression and injustice inflicted upon them by tyrant regimes and countries.
- When this violent reaction comes from your opponents, you claim whatever it takes to destroy their image and distort the facts.
- Simply put, Islam is innocent from its affiliation with terrorism. With so much oppression and injustice practiced against Muslims in modern times is forcing more and more violent reactions of humans who are in great hardships and suffering with no sympathy from the world leaderships and organizations. To the contrary, there is more support to the oppressors while the oppressed get no more than hollow lip service at best.
- Let me close this point by stating that violence and terrorism are human reaction that can only be cured by identifying and solving the root cause. Using force to counter violence will do nothing but make the situation worst.

Jihad

- Jihad is often mistranslated as "holy war" as it suggests an attempt to spread Islam by force. This goes against one of the tenets of Islam that "the freedom of belief is a God-Given-Right."
- True, no one can deny that nowadays the word jihad is closely linked with violent struggle in the many places in the Muslim world. You hear of groups and organizations with the names

of "Islamic Jihad" and "Al Jihad" as well as others who uses the term in describing their cause.

- The truth is that Jihad in Islam is the act of "exertion and extension of efforts for the cause of God"
- It refers to one's "personal struggle to be righteous" and we Muslims engage in jihad daily.
- We do Jihad against our "human temptations". We do jihad to implement righteousness in our life styles (physically and spiritually). I am doing Jihad right now, as I speak to you about the misconceptions of Islam while trying my best to be accurate and informative.
- Now, we come to the "holy war" aspect of jihad. While Jihad does call for Muslims to fight for the rights of all people, Islam also demands that violence and war be a last resort.
- It is an Islamic religious duty to defend and protect God-given rights with vigor and commitment, be it the rights of Muslims or non-Muslims. Peaceful means are to be exhausted before resorting to the use of force.
- If force is to be used, the Islamic code of ethics "or rules of engagement" strictly calls for :
  - Muslims are only to fight the oppressors, the aggressors, and the forces of injustice.
  - Muslims are not to press heavier than necessary nor are they to exceed the necessary limits on the battlefield.
  - Peace must not be withheld when the enemy comes to terms.
  - Killing, molesting, or abusing civilian elderly, women, and children is prohibited.
  - Destroying farms, factories, infrastructure, churches, etc. is not allowed.
  - Prisoners of war are treated in the most humane way.
  - Simply put, Muslims are to observe the highest code of ethics that would leave the door open for the defeated (lives saved in the battle) to voluntarily and willingly join Islam later on with no bitterness or bad feelings.
- True, we often see this code and that these rules are being broken. In this regard, let us be reminded that when the pressure and injustice exceed human tolerance and withstanding, human beings (Muslims or non-Muslims) breakdown and are tempted to revolt and respond violently.
- I conclude by stating that you can't demand ideal behavior from human beings living under oppressive regimes and unjust tyrannies. Meanwhile, you can't defend their wrong actions either.

Women's Rights

- We recognize that women constitute 50% or more of the human population.
- Any system (or religion) that that does not empower such a great portion of its population most definitely is ill functioning.
- Islam throughout its history of flourishing that led to the world of enlightment that we all live nowadays could have never done so without the support and empowerment of its women.

- Islam acknowledges women as equal partners to men in fulfilling God's purpose for our existence on this earth.
- Men and women are to complement each other and not to compete with each other.
- In Islam, men and women are equal, yet they are not identical. It therefore follows that the rights and responsibilities of a woman are equal to those of a man but they are not necessarily identical. Equality and sameness are two quite different things. People are not created identical but they are created equal.
- What is behind this misconception are the practices of a few whether countries, societies, or individuals that are mostly cultural that has nothing to do with Islam. Women abuse is a worldwide phenomenon that is not limited to Muslim societies. To the contrary, in many Muslim societies women abuse is way below the norms elsewhere.
- Let me close this point by stating that in my electrical engineering bachelor's graduating class in Egypt in 1966, the class had about 100 students out of which there were about 25 females.
- Today, I am supervising a VT doctoral program in Engineering with about 75 Egyptian students with about 1/3 of them are female. This ratio far exceeds the US and western world numbers by a huge margin.
- To tackle the point of Hijab, which often triggers the issue of "Women's oppression" in Islam, we need to recognize that Hijab is not a man-imposed dress code for women.
- Muslim women recognize Hijab as an Islamic dress code that they do for the sake of God.
- Muslim women recognize Hijab as part of modesty of appearance that empowers them to be respected for their intellect and not for their physical appearance.

Sharia Law

Sharia (Islamic law) is a comprehensive system of laws that covers all aspects of human live as individuals, societies, and states. The areas of Islamic law include:

- **Hygiene and purification laws**.
- **Economic laws**, including prohibition on interest and inheritance laws.
- **Dietary laws**.
- **Theological obligations**.
- **Marital jurisprudence**.
- **Criminal jurisprudence**.
- **Military jurisprudence**.
- **Dress code**.
- Other topics include customs and behavior and external relations.

The concept of crime, judicial process, justice and punishment embodied in sharia is different from that of secular law. The differences between sharia and secular laws have led to an on-going controversy as to whether sharia is compatible with modern societies.

Sharia's goal is to protect and promote basic human God-given rights, including

- ***Faith,***
- ***Life,***
- ***Family,***
- ***Property and***
- ***Intellect***.

In fact, Islam has adopted two courses for the preservation of these five indispensables:

- First: through cultivating religious consciousness in the human soul and the awakening of human awareness through moral education; and
- Second: by inflicting deterrent punishment, which is the basis of the Islamic criminal system.

It is important here to recognize that the second is not to be used unless the first approach is fully exhausted while the criminal is convicted of committing the crime beyond any shadow of doubt.

Allah is the god of Muslims

- Muslims believe in the One and Only Creator Who Created the whole universe and all it contains, the human race included.
- He is the same God who Created Adam, Sent us messengers and prophets to guide humanity to wholesome quality life.
- He is the God of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, pbut all.
- The Quran reveals to us that Allah is his name. That is why Muslims use the name "Allah" to refer to Him.
- Arabic speaking Christian and Jews use the name Allah to refer to Him as well.