

Lesser Jihad

Conditions for the use of force

The use of force is permitted in these conditions:

- 1) **In self-defence.** As the Qur'an states: *Those who are fought against are permitted [to fight] because they have been wronged, and Allah is indeed able to help them* (Qur'an 22:39)
- 2) **As a last resort:** when peaceful methods have failed
- 3) **To preserve Islam,** or to enable Muslims to practice freely
- 4) **To protect the oppressed:** for example from a tyrant or unjust regime.

Jihad must be declared by a legitimate Islamic leader.

When Muslims do fight, there are principles to observe, following the passage:

Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress. Indeed Allah does not like transgressors. (Qur'an 2: 190)

- a) Protect the innocent as far as possible
- b) Do not rape
- c) No poisonous weapons, or poisoning of the natural world
- d) Protect resources needed for the future, including water, plants and animals
- e) Use minimum force
- f) Avoid damaging buildings, including religious
- g) Be just to prisoners of war
- h) Stop fighting as soon as possible or when the other party surrenders

Use of force does NOT meet the conditions of jihad if:

- a) used to convert others to Islam
- b) used to subjugate other nations
- c) used to take land for economic gain
- d) used to settle disputes that do not require violence
- e) other peaceful means have not been exhausted
- f) not declared by a legitimate Muslim ruler; declared by a political ruler
- g) it involves fighting other Muslims

Would it be jihad for Britain to declare war on Assad's Syria?

The people of Britain should declare war on Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria.

Since Assad's forces responded with violence to peaceful pro-democracy protests in March 2011, the country had collapsed into civil war. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have died. Millions have fled, half of them children. They face a bleak future. Should the UK declare war on the Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria?

PRINCIPLES OF JIHAD	APPLIED TO SYRIA	HAS THE PRINCIPLE OF JIHAD BEEN MET?
Self-defence	Assad is fighting his own people in a brutal civil war. Some groups fighting him would not necessarily offer a more democratic Syria if they gained power. Britain has no remit over these groups. Britain is not under any immediate threat, although the civil war has enabled the rise of Islamic State (IS), which has the intention of causing mayhem and bloodshed all over the Western world and thousands of Syrian refugees are attempting to enter European countries.	
Authority in declaring war	The United Nations could declare war, but Russia blocks any attack on Assad, so other member nations do not have the authority. The UN can also declare war in self-defence. Britain is a sovereign state and could declare war between itself and Assad's regime. However, none of these organisations are Islamic authorities.	
Protecting the innocent against evil	While Assad's brutality is appalling, it is far from clear if arming and supporting Syrian rebel groups would lead to democracy and stability. However the scale of human suffering in Syria is immense, from Assad's chemical attacks and the systematic destruction of habitation and infrastructure, to the staggering barbarity of IS. The people of Syria desperately need help.	
Last resort	Peaceful negotiations did not get very far before Assad's attacks on his own people escalated; bombing towns and villages, including schools, attacking refugees and using chlorine gas. America negotiated with Assad to remove his chemical weapons, but only after he had used them on civilians. The rise of IS makes Assad's crimes seem less horrific. Throughout attempted negotiations, Assad refuses to admit any culpability.	

Overall answer: *would it be jihad for Britain to declare war on Assad's Syria?*