

Stages in the development of the Islamist theology and practice of suicidal attacks over the last 45 years

Under each entry in the chronology, the text in italics indicates where the respective concept was first applied or gained prominence.

Part 1: Developments from 1960 to 1980, before the first religiously motivated suicide attacks, provide the background for later developments

1960 onwards: Men are allowed to take it upon themselves to wage jihad against infidels and do not have to wait for a call from the caliph or other authorities, as was the case in previous centuries.

Teachings of Islamist movements in the late 20th century.

1972 onwards: Yassir Arafat and the Palestinians use suicide bombers without any religious justification.

First in 1972 at Lod Airport in Israel (it was not until about a decade later that Hezbollah adopted the approach with religious justification).

1973 onwards: The previously largely nationally oriented warlike jihad becomes a transnational jihad against all infidels.

Argued for in the writings of the Muslim Brotherhood, finalized since the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973.

1980–1988: Minors are sent to jihad.

Iraq-Iran War 1980–1988: Children as soldiers on Khomeini's orders.

Part 2: The nine stages of the radicalisation of religiously motivated suicidal attacks and their theological legitimisation

1980 onwards: Adult men are allowed to commit suicide if they take infidels with them to their deaths.

1980 in Syria against the government / the 1980s onwards Hezbollah / 1983 in Beirut / the 1990s onwards Hamas and others / 2000 onwards Chechnya.

1981 onwards: Suicide attacks may be directed against governments of Islamic states that are considered infidel.

1981 assassination of Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat / 1993 onwards Hamas against the Palestinian Authority / 2002 onwards Indonesia.

1984 onwards: Suicide attacks are, in a sense, 'canonized' as part of the fight against infidels.

1984 onwards in Palestine (Hamas) / 1990s onwards Hezbollah / 2000 onwards, Chechen war.

1990 onwards: The surviving dependents of suicide bombers are to be honored and financially supported.

Most intensively practiced by the Shiite Hezbollah since the 1990s.

2000 onwards: Underage male youths and children are allowed to be suicide bombers, usually from the age of 12.

2000 onwards Intifada in Israel / 2010 onwards ISIS.

2001 onwards: It is permissible to be a suicide bomber even if (many) Muslims die as collateral damage.

First in Palestine, then on September 11, 2001 / 2003 onwards in Iraq.

2003 onwards: It is permissible to be a suicide bomber even if only Muslims (or almost only Muslims) die in the process.

From 2003 onwards in Iraq.

2002: Women, who previously appeared only as proud mothers of male suicide bombers, are allowed to be suicide bombers.

2002 for the first time in Palestine.

2011: Underage girls are allowed to be suicide bombers.

2011 onwards in Iraq / 2014 onwards: on a large scale in Nigeria (Boko Haram).