An Evaluation of Holy War in Abrahamic Religions and its Effects on 21st-Century Northern Nigerian Society

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Abstract

Holy war, a concept deeply rooted in the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, has been a contentious and complex subject throughout history. This study evaluates holy war, also known as "just war" or "jihad," and its profound impact on 21st-century Northern Nigerian society. The study adopts historical and exploratory methods to explore the historical origins and evolution of the concept within each Abrahamic religion. By examining historical events, theological doctrines, and contemporary manifestations, the paper sheds light on the implications of holy war on modern society. It delves into significant historical conflicts and sacred texts that have influenced the perception and justification of holy war across the centuries. It analyses key religious figures, scholars, and authorities who have shaped the discourse surrounding the concept and its moral justifications. The concept of holy war over time has supported religious extremism and terrorist movements that claim religious motivations in northern Nigeria, with their devastating impact on politics, international relations, and societal cohesion. The paper critically evaluates the implications of holy war in Abrahamic religions and its far-reaching consequences on 21st-century society. *It emphasizes the need for nuanced interpretations and an appreciation of historical and cultural contexts to avoid perpetuating misconceptions or promoting religious intolerance. Finally, it emphasises the importance of ongoing interfaith dialogue and the exploration of peaceful alternatives to address conflicts arising from religious differences in today's diverse global society.*

Keywords: holy war, Abrahamic religions, evaluation, 21st-century society, conflict.

Introduction eligion has been destructively criticized and is still passing through criticism. This is due largely to the sufferings and devastated situations humanity has passed through over the centuries as a result of many wars caused or justified by religion (Uchenna 2017).[1] The Islamic Jihads, the Crusades, and the European Religious Wars are

some of the examples. However, scholars such as B. Russell, who believe that all religions promote violence ignore that, a core value of religion is peace. It was on the instances of the above negative manifestations Bertrand Russell, the famous British philosopher regards religion as a source of untold misery to the human race. (Russell 1966)[2] Therefore, it can be argued that religion and violence are two mutually exclusive concepts with no direct and definite correlation.

The Arabic word "jihad" translates as holy war, is associated with Islam and is commonly used and misused in European–American society in recent times. Meanwhile, the Crusades are associated with Christianity and stories of the past. Regarding Judaism, there is no Hebrew term referring to holy war, however, religious war is related to all three religions without reference to a specific word reference. What the world experienced in the last half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century was a religious war that had a secular image for Christians and Jews, but had a Jihad or holy war image for Muslims. Media attention to Islamic jihad has attracted public attention regarding the comparison of similar jihadists among Christians and Jews. These three monotheistic religions have a common origin as religions that de-

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veloped in the Middle East (Nader 2015).

Anthropologists use critical comparisons to reveal contemporary events from the perspective of politicians, political experts, journalists and orientalists because this term (holy war) is very important for today's world. It is very important because it causes mass murder and various destruction (Nader 2015).[4] In the context of Judaism, the concept of holy war finds its roots in the Hebrew Bible. The ancient Israelites believed in a covenant with their God, who commanded them to conquer the land of Canaan, which was seen as their promised land. The religious and territorial sanctity of the Israelites and their divine mandate to subdue their enemies formed the foundation for the concept of holy war in Judaism.

Christianity, in contrast, initially emerged as a pacifistic movement, with Jesus Christ emphasizing peace, love, and non-violence. However, over time, the notion of holy war found its way into Christian history through the Crusades. These military campaigns, launched during the medieval period, aimed to regain control of holy sites in the Holy Land and protect Christendom from perceived threats. The Crusades raised profound theological questions, as Christian theologians grappled with reconciling the teachings of Christ with the necessity of armed conflict. The analysis of the Crusades and the theological justifications offered for holy war in Christianity sheds light on the evolving interpretations and implications of the concept within the Christian tradition.

Within Islam, the concept of holy war is often associated with jihad, a term that has been widely misunderstood and misinterpreted. While jihad does encompass the idea of armed struggle, it also encompasses non-violent forms of striving, such as the personal struggle against inner vices and the pursuit of righteousness. The early expansion of Islam, driven by both religious and political motivations, witnessed the development of a doctrine of just war and the notion of defensive jihad. The contemporary understanding of jihad within the Islamic world is highly diverse, with varying interpretations and debates surrounding its scope, legitimacy, and conditions. Exploring the multifaceted nature of jihad and the historical contexts in which it emerged provides valuable insights into the Islamic understanding of holy war.

This study adopts historical and explorative methods to explore the historical origins and evolution of the concept within each Abrahamic religion. By exploring the origins, interpretations, and implications of holy war within Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, this study aims to foster a comprehensive understanding of the concept and promote interfaith dialogue that encourages tolerance, empathy, and peaceful coexistence. By appreciating the complexities and nuances of holy war within the Abrahamic religions, we can contribute to a more informed and inclusive conversation about religious violence, extremism, and the potential for peaceful alternatives in our diverse global society.

Concept of Holy War

"Holy wars" are understood to be wars of aggression waged with a claimed missionization purpose at the command of a given divinity. It is of secondary importance whether they are fought in the name of one god or many. Johnson (2002), revealed the similarities in the meaning of holy war for the three monotheistic religions, namely Islam, Christianity and Judaism, where Islam represents the Islamic tradition, while
Christianity and Judaism represent the Western tradition. According to him, the con-

5 cept of holy war is
the initial idea of holy war in ancient Israel. In a broad sense, this concept is also central to the Islamic idea of Jihad as a response to God's command for all humans to submit to Him. However, this response does not require a specific call to take up arms but implies a command to try to believe.

Holy war is carried out in the Abrahamic scripture (Torah, Bible and Qur'an) because of God's command. It is done in God's name by his authorized representatives. The meaning of this concept is at the heart of the Pope's authorization of the crusades. Holy war is also at the heart of the authorization of jihad, in a specifically military sense, by religious leaders and politicians united in Islamic countries according to the *Sunni* tradition, and in the *Shia* tradition by

an Imam in hiding or by his special representative. Religious leaders claimed that this war was a war waged by God himself. Holy war is the idea given by Old Testament writers, such as Isaiah and with an eschatological meaning, by the Prophets of the 8th century BC. The idea of God being actively present in battle, not as a fighter per se, but as a Being who is personally present and assisting with His power, is often found in the Hebraic and Christian traditions. This idea does not factor into the Islamic understanding of war because in Islam, Muslims fight on behalf of God's dominion on earth, but God is not involved in war.

In the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), holy war is said to be a war waged to defend religion against its enemies, inside and outside. The concept of defensive holy war is very pervasive in Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions. In Islam, holy war is a major component of contemporary Muslim thinking about jihad across a broad spectrum

Origins of Holy War in Abrahamic Religions

The origins of holy war in Abrahamic religions can be traced back to the ancient religions and historical contexts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. While the specific theological justifications and practices of holy war vary among these traditions, they share common threads in their historical narratives and religious beliefs.

Holy war in judaism

For Judaism, there is no single term for holy war / jihad, so there is not a single media that mentions the term holy war in the formation of the new state of Israel. Although, the concept of holy war in Judaism finds its origins in the Hebrew Bible, particularly in the narratives of the Israelites' conquest of Canaan. In Judaism, holy war is often referred to as "milhemet mitzvah," – מחלמ הוואצמת-meaning a commanded war or an obligatory war; "It is a positive commandment for all generations obligating every individual, even during the period of exile." The belief in a chosen people and the divine covenant with God played a significant role in shaping the understanding and practice of holy war in Judaism. (Reuven 2015)[6]

According to the Hebrew Bible, God promised the land of Canaan to the Israelites as their inheritance. This land was considered sacred and central to their religious identity. The Israelites saw themselves as the chosen people, bound by a covenant with God, and were commanded to conquer and possess the land. This divine mandate provided a religious justification for engaging in military campaigns against the Canaanite nations (Joshua 1-24 (NKJV). Bible Gateway. 2012).[7] The Hebrew Bible also contains instructions and laws regarding warfare, including guidelines for conducting war ethically and establishing a just society.

In Rabbi Reuven's book, *Holy War: A Jewish Problem,* he asserted that when the rabbis in Mishnah *Sotah* 8:7 categorized Israel's wars as obligatory or discretionary, they were attempting to define and dismiss a dangerous phenomenon that had twice in their memory brought devastation to the Jewish people. Both the Great Revolt of 66 C.E. and the *Bar Kokhba* Rebellion of 132 C.E.–two of the most horrific and catastrophic events that the Jewish people ever experienced–were driven by Jewish holy war ideas. After the Mishnah, Jewish holy war ideas lay virtually dormant for most of their exilic existence.

However, they were discussed briefly by certain medieval thinkers and appear in some of their apocalyptic and messianic writings. But holy war has been revived in contemporary Israel, especially among ultranationalist Orthodox settlers in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and their many supporters. The war may now be accurately called, a war between Israel and the Palestinians–is defined by many religiously observant settlers and their supporters as a divine obligation to reclaim the whole of the land of Israel as either a prelude to or as part of the messianic awakening.

As the Jewish holy war has entered religious and political discourse with the Israel-Palestine conflict, so has the increase of Jewish atrocities in the name of a higher cause. It reached its peak in the mid-1980s to mid-1990s with the maiming and murder of Muslim non-combatants by the Jewish Underground, the massacre of Muslims in prayer by Barukh Goldstein, and Yigal Amir's assassination of Prime Minis-

8 ter Yitzhak Rabin (Reuven 2015). The Israelites viewed their military campaigns as a divinely sanctioned obligation and saw themselves as instruments of God's will in establishing a holy nation, which sometimes affected them to date.

Holy war ideas continue to inform the behaviour of many religious settlers to this day, though there has been a concerted effort by both the Israeli government and the settler movement to refrain from committing such blatant atrocities. However, it is important to note that the concept of holy war in Judaism is not solely focused on militaristic conquest. Judaism emphasizes the pursuit of peace and the establishment of justice. The Hebrew prophets, for example, spoke of a vision of peace and reconciliation, where swords would be transformed into ploughshares. Jewish ethics and values emphasize the pursuit of peace, self-defence, and the preservation of life, and these principles often guide contemporary Jewish perspectives on warfare.

Holy War in Christianity and Theological Justification

The concept of holy war in Christianity has evolved throughout history and is primarily associated with the Crusades, a series of military campaigns undertaken by European Christians during the medieval period. The Crusades were launched to reclaim Jerusalem and other holy sites from Muslim control. The concept of

holy war in Christianity during this period was influenced by religious, political, and territorial factors.

For Christians, the word "Crusade" is used instead of the word "jihad." *The Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion* defines the Crusades as military expeditions of Christian forces in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries whose aim was to expel Muslims from the Holy Land. In today's Anglo-American West, the word is used by evangeli-

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Christians who operate with religious fervour (Leeming 2010). On September 17, 2001, then-President of the United States George W. Bush used the word "Crusade" to fight terrorism to raise fears, that such language could trigger hatred and distrust be-

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n Christians and Muslims (Dwi, et al. 2024).

The Crusades were the West's first movement to invade the East in history, believing in the holy wars' righteousness. The papacy and preachers played a significant role in the military mobilization of Christians in the late 11th century. In addition to the legacy and influence of the Church, individuals who participated in expeditions played a significant role in shaping the Christian mentality on violence. To illustrate this notion, the *Gesta Francorum* is an anonymous book written by a highly sophisticated and outspoken skilled professional knight to emphasize the importance of the Pope's summon as a requirement for both a developed sense of feudal loyalty and social responsibility. The preface of the *Gesta* expresses the origin of the Crusade in the following sentences:

> When that time had already come, of which the Lord Jesus warns his faithful people every day, especially in the Gospel where he says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," there was a great stirring of heart throughout all the Frankish lands so that if any man, with all his heart and all his mind, really wanted to follow God and faithfully to bear the cross after him, he could make no delay in taking the road to the Holy Sepulchers as

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ly as possible (Cowdrey 1976).

The theological justification for holy war in Christianity during the Crusades was based on the concept of a just war. Christian theologians, such as St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, developed a framework for understanding when war could be deemed justifiable. St. Augustine developed the scope of Christian warfare. argues that Christians should resort to violence when they cannot resolve conflicts peacefully. He states that individuals cannot act to initiate violent hostility, but the divine authority of the empire has the right to declare war (Riley-Smith 2014).[12] Therefore, a war waged on behalf of the sovereign authority

should be considered as legitimate as long as it has the intention to prevent injustice circumstances and establish peace.

Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) is another Christian theologian who developed the doctrine of the "just war." He argues that self-defence is a rightful reason for war; hence, he legitimizes violent acts, which Christians would conduct to protect them-

13 selves (Heft 2010). In his book, *Siumma Theologica*, Aquinas emphasizes three factors which are obligatory for a war to be considered just. First, sovereign authority is the only power that can declare war since they are the only ones with the right to summon troops in wartime. Secondly, Aquinas argues that those being attacked must be guilty of a crime serious enough to deserve punishment. Their crime must be serious enough to deserve punishment; therefore, attacking them would be a just cause. Aquinas's last reason for a just war is the requirement that the belligerents intend to establish the advancement of goodness and avoid evil (Aquinas 2014).[14]

However, it is important to note that the concept of holy war in Christianity is not universally accepted or endorsed by all Christian denominations. Christianity, as founded by Jesus Christ, emphasizes principles of love, peace, and non-violence. Jesus taught his followers to turn the other cheek, love their enemies, and seek reconciliation. These teachings form the core of Christian ethics and challenge the notion of holy war.

Holy War in Islam

The concept of holy war, often referred to as "jihad," plays a significant role in Islam. Jihad, in its broadest sense, means "struggle" or "striving" and encompasses various forms, including the inner struggle against one's own base desires, the struggle to improve oneself and society, and, in certain circumstances, armed self-defence or fight-

15 ing in the cause of Islam (Esposito, Jihad: Holy or Unholy War? 2003) .It means "effort" and is understood in many passages in the Qur'an as a moral "struggle with oneself" on the way to finding God: "Fight for the cause of God with the devotion due to Him. He has chosen you." (Sura22:78).[16]

The combination of the words "holy" and "war" does not appear in the Koran; according to Islamic understanding, a war can never be "holy" The Arabic word *harb* is the general term for war, but *jihad* is a well-known concept referring to warfare. The Quran refers to jihad as a duty incumbent upon Muslims to defend the faith, protect the community, and establish justice. (Hans 2005)[17] Wars are permissible in Islamic law, namely, some verses of the Quran and the Prophet set the patterns for wars. As it is stated in the Qur'an: Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed. Allah

does not like transgressors. (Qur'an, 2:190. n.d.)

In particular, *Surah* 2:193 says wars are permissible and also provides an understanding of jihad as warfare:

> And fight them until no more oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah; but if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression.

It is essential to distinguish the times and circumstances that caused the Quranic verses to be revealed. As indicated in verses 2:190-193, the opponent was polytheist Mecca's people who marched to Medina to wage war against the early Muslims. With the above verses, wars became permissible for Muslims, as self-defense, not for aggression. However, since the 9/11 terrorist attacks and suicide attacks in the West, scholars, politicians, and the mainstream media have associated the term jihad with violent-based modern warfare.

John Kelsay, whose expertise is the morality of warfare in Western and Islamic traditions, outlines jihad's transformation during "regime change." In this process, tyrannical, or Islamic, governments adopt *al-shari'a*, "Islamic law," to rule the Muslim community. Islamic law imposes obligations that the Islamic State's citizens should obey. Alongside paying taxes and honouring the ruler, jihad's participation is one of the Islamic law commitments. (Kelsay 2007) In his theory, "*Shari'a* reasoning," Kelsay demonstrates how rulers and influential Muslim scholars played a critical role in the development of Islamic law including jihad.[19]

M. L. Treica, in his book, *Ethics of Holy War*, stated that *Jihad* does not mean holy war but rather represents an individual path, the spiritual quest of every Muslim. A solitary quest. The importance of jihad is rooted in the Quran's command to "struggle or exert" (the literal meaning of the word *jihad*) oneself in the path of God. Jihad can be understood as the use of all energies and resources to establish the Islamic system of life, to obtain the favour of Allah - hence the impression that this is the Holy War, an obvious mistake, in the context is about the individual and not the society.

It is an Arabic word that means to test your own limits. It is a continuous process. In its first phase, a Muslim learns to control his own evil desires and intentions. He has to strive hard to achieve this. This Jihad is within the individual and is the basis of the deeper jihad, which involves establishing *maruf* (righteousness) and the removal of *munkar* (evil) from the lives of individuals and then from society. Thus, individuals skip the most important stage - cleaning the evil from their souls – and set about cleaning the evil directly from society. A kind of - "Washing the glass on the outside" (Treica 2023).[20]

It is crucial to note that the vast majority of Muslims understand jihad as a peace-ful and personal struggle for self-improvement and righteousness. Islamic scholars and leaders often stress the importance of nonviolence, dialogue, and peaceful coexistence as core principles of the faith. While armed conflict can be a component of jihad under certain circumstances (Stern 2012), the broader understanding of jihad emphasizes non-violence, self-improvement, and the pursuit of peace.[21] The interpretation and application of jihad vary among individuals and Muslim communities, reflecting the diverse perspectives within the Islamic tradition.

Extremist and Terrorist Movements Underlying Religious Motives

It would be wrong to attribute all the wars fought by the Christians, Muslims or Jews in recent centuries to religious motives. Blame for the killing of innumerable citizens in Northern Nigerian by extremist Muslims (Boko Haram), the killing of hundreds of civilians in Lebanon or Palestine by Israelite soldiers, or the wars in Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso that are being fought between Muslims and animists, many of whom have converted to Christianity, verily cannot be laid at the door of sacred scriptures (Torah, Bible and Qur'an). But as an impact of religious extremists and terrorists, underlying religious motives.

Esposito, John, in his *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam.* opines that terrorists like Osama bin Laden and others go beyond classical Islam's criteria for a just *jihad* and recognize no limits but their own, employing any weapons or means. They reject Islamic law's regulations regarding the goals and legitimate means for a valid jihad: that violence must be proportional and that only the necessary amount of force should be used to repel the enemy, that innocent civilians should not be targeted, and that *jihad* must be declared by the ruler or head of state.[22] Today, individuals and groups, religious and lay, seize the right to declare and legitimate unholy wars of terrorism in the name of Islam.

Whenever the leaders of other terrorist groups in North Africa, the Middle East, South, Southeast and Central Asia speak today, like all Muslims, they often use the past to legitimate their agenda and tactics. They place themselves under the mantle of the Prophet, linking their militant jihadist worldviews to famous earlier interpretations of jihad such as the prominent medieval theologian and legal scholar Ibn Taymiyya and the 20th-century Egyptian intellectual and Islamic activist Sayyid Qutb, the [23] godfather of modern revolutionary Islam (Esposito 2002).

The murder of a female student, Deborah Samuel, in Nigeria's northwestern Sokoto on the 13th of May 2022, can be categorized as a result of religious extremists, and underlying religious motives (Ewang 2022)[24]. Also, the Jewish

holy war by religious extremists continues to inform the behaviour of many religious settlers in Israel to this day, the idea has entered religious and political discourse with the IsraelPalestine conflict, and so has the increase of Jewish atrocities in the name of a higher cause.

Implications of Holy War in the 21st-Century Society

The concept of holy war, deeply embedded in the religious doctrines of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, continues to have significant implications for 21st-century society. Hans Küng (2005), in his *Religion, Violence and "Holy Wars,"* assert that in this 21st century, wars are neither "holy," "just" nor "clean." Even modern "wars of Yahweh" (*Sharon*), "crusades" (*Bush*) and "jihad" (*al Qaeda*), with their toll on countless human lives, their large-scale destruction of the infrastructure and cultural heritage and the damage they do to the environment, are utterly irresponsible.[25] However, the idea of

"holy war" in the 21st century affects global politics, societal cohesion, and interna-

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tional relations (Armstrong 2001).

The invocation of holy war can intensify regional conflicts, particularly in areas with a history of religious tension. For instance, the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, ISIS in Iraq and Syria, the violent and murderous activities of the Maitatsine sects in Nigeria between 1980 and 1985, and the present Boko Haram violence are a few examples of sad situations religion has caused humanity (Uchenna 2017)[27]. Due to their strength, they sometimes engage in proxy wars where religious ideologies are used to mobilize local support and justify interventions. The ideology of holy war has been co-opted by terrorist organizations to legitimize their actions and recruit members globally, especially in political matters. These terrorists are employed to cause havoc during political periods underlying religious matters.

The rhetoric of holy war exacerbates tensions between religious communities. In multicultural societies like Nigeria, especially in the northern part, events like terrorist attacks or inflammatory language by religious leaders can lead to mistrust and hostility among different faith groups. Regions affected by conflicts framed as holy wars experience significant economic disruption. Trade, investment, and development efforts are hindered by ongoing violence and instability. The humanitarian impact of conflicts driven by holy war ideology includes displacement, loss of livelihoods, and long-term socio-economic challenges.

In Kano, a 45-year-old woman was stabbed to death at Kofar Wambai market by a mob, which accused her of "blasphemy." The killers slit her throat and also attempted to murder her husband but for the intervention of the police. Also, Deborah's case was gruesome. She was stoned and beaten to death by fellow students, drunk on the opium of religious extremism after she advised them

against posting religious comments on the class WhatsApp group. For the religious fanatics in the group, that was enough provocation. They accused her of "saying unacceptable things," and beat her mercilessly with sticks, clubs and heavy stones (*Punch* 2023).[28]

Addressing these humanitarian crises requires substantial resources and international cooperation. Therefore, the idea of holy war remains a potent force with farreaching implications for 21st-century society. It influences political dynamics, social cohesion, legal frameworks, and economic stability. Addressing these implications requires a multifaceted approach that includes promoting interfaith dialogue, ensuring just and inclusive policies, and strengthening international cooperation to counteract extremist narratives. By understanding and mitigating the impacts of holy war ideology, societies can work towards a more peaceful and harmonious global community.

Nuanced Interpretations of Holy War and Interfaith Dialogue

Holy Books are the primary sources of religion that constitute the essence of religions and the books of all Abrahamic religions mostly emphasize pluralism, tolerance, and peace. However, these sacred texts also contain scriptural texts about war. As previously mentioned, jurists and clergy played a critical role in transforming theology and misinterpreting sacred scriptures to conform to their self-interests. Most Muslims and Christians are hardly aware that few verses of the Qur'an and Bible are concerned with "war" and "violence," and that the words "mercy" and "peace" occur far more frequently than "jihad" or "holy war."

According to the Qur'an, God is not the lord of war (that is no name for God!); on the contrary, as in the first words (cited by Muslims at the beginning of any prayer or speech) of the opening sura, He is "the Compassionate, the Merciful." Among His 99 names, there are such peaceful titles as "the Gentle," "the Forbearing," the "Loving One," "the Forgiver." Allah explicitly forbids killing and promotes saving lives in the following verse: …if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind… (Qur 'an5:32. [29] n.d.).

The Qur'an regards Jews and Christians as *Ahl al-Kitab* (the People of the Book) [30] (Qur'an3:64 n.d.). With that, the Qur'an calls people to an interfaith initiative, rather than perpetual war. Moreover, the Prophet did not attempt to classify the word; rather, Muslim scholars developed this classification after the Prophet passed away during the early Abbasid dynasty (750-1258CE) (Hassan 2007).[31]

Likewise, Jews and Christianity aim to establish peace and adopt pacifism as a core teaching. Christianity initially emerged as a pacifistic movement under the teachings of Jesus Christ, who emphasized love, peace, and non-violence. Hence, it is possible to claim that scholars' "misinterpretation" of sacred scriptures can cause re-

32 ligiously motivated violence (Onur 2020). Therefore, promoting interfaith dialogue becomes crucial in mitigating the negative impacts of holy war ideology. Initiatives aimed at fostering understanding and cooperation between religious communities can help address misconceptions and build social cohesion.

Conclusion

The ideology of holy war, rooted in the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, continues to exert a profound influence on 21st-century society. Its implications are far-reaching, affecting political and geopolitical dynamics, social and cultural cohesion, legal and human rights frameworks, and economic stability. The persistence of this ideology, especially in the form of radicalization and extremism, presents significant challenges to peace and security in Nigeria. In a globalized world, the rapid dissemination of holy war rhetoric through digital media and transnational networks has amplified its impact. This has complicated international relations, intensified regional conflicts, and fueled global terrorism. Moreover, the ideology of holy war exacerbates interfaith tensions and challenges efforts towards societal integration and multiculturalism.

Addressing the implications of holy war ideology requires a comprehensive and nuanced approach. Governments, religious leaders, civil society, and international organizations must collaborate to promote understanding, tolerance, and peace. However, the following are recommended;

- **Develop technological solutions for monitoring extremist content:** The Government should partner with technology companies and cybersecurity experts to ensure realtime monitoring and swift removal of harmful content while maintaining user privacy and free speech.
- **Launch global religious literacy campaign:** Initiate a worldwide campaign to improve religious literacy, focusing on the historical contexts and teachings of major religions concerning peace and conflict. Produce and distribute multimedia content, including documentaries, podcasts, and interactive websites, to educate the public about the complexities of holy war and promote interfaith harmony.
- **Integrate peace education in religious institutions:** Encourage religious institutions to incorporate peace education into their curricula, emphasizing the peaceful teachings and historical contexts of their faith traditions.
- **Promote economic empowerment in vulnerable communities:** Support entrepreneur-

ship programs and vocational training that offer alternatives to joining extremist groups, thereby reducing the appeal of holy war narratives.

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