

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Allah:** in Islam, the Supreme Being; an Arabic word for God.

**Al Qaida/Al Qaeda:** a radical Islamic terrorist organization, militantly opposed to Western countries and dedicated to the elimination of Western presence and foreign policy in Arab countries; founded by Osama bin Laden.

**burka or burqa:** the outer garment worn by some Muslim women to cover the face and body in public.<sup>1</sup>

**Coptic Christian/Church:** a member of the native Christian church in Egypt, which is characterized by the use of the Coptic language in its liturgy.

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1. "Burqa," Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/burqa>.

**Five Pillars:** the religious framework of the Muslim life; the five duties include the **testimony of faith, prayer, giving zakat** (support for the needy), **fasting during the month of Ramadan**, and **the haj** (pilgrimage to the city of Mecca).<sup>2</sup>

**Hadith:** sayings and deeds of the prophet Muhammad, which constitute the second source of guidance for Muslims apart from the Quran.<sup>3</sup>

**haj:** a traditional pilgrimage Muslims make to Mecca.

**hijab:** a head covering commonly worn in public by Muslim women.

**honor killing:** “the killing of a relative, especially a female relative, as retribution for the perceived dishonoring of the family, as sanctioned by some cultures and religions.”<sup>4</sup>

**Imam:** the officiating priest of a mosque or the title for a Muslim religious leader.

**ISIS:** known by variant names (*ISIL, IS, Daesh*), ISIS is an abbreviation for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, a terrorist militant group following a fundamentalist doctrine of Sunni Islam.

**Islam:** the religious faith of Muslims, founded by the prophet Muhammad and informed by the Quran, the basic principle being absolute submission to Allah (God).

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2. “What Are the Five Pillars of Islam?,” <https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~msa/tour/ch3-16.htm>.

3. “Hadith,” Lexico, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/hadith>.

4. “Honor killing,” Dictionary.com, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/honor-killing>.

**jihad/jihadis:** literally meaning “struggle” or “strife,” this term refers to a sacred “exerted effort” in Islam—in the Quran, often used to denote the personal struggle for self-improvement but also used with military connotations—the meaning of this word is wide-ranging across various Muslim cultures.

**Koran or Qur’an/Quran:** “the sacred text of Islam, divided into 114 chapters or *suras*; revered as the word of God dictated to Muhammad”; the foundation of Islamic life.<sup>5</sup>

**mosque:** a Muslim temple or place of public worship.

**Muhammad:** an Arab religious and political leader and the founder of Islam, a prophet according to Islamic doctrine.

**Muslim:** an adherent of the religion of Islam.

**Ramadan:** the ninth month of the Muslim calendar and the name for the daily fast that is rigidly enjoined from dawn until sunset during this month.

**Sharia Law:** “the body of canonical law based on the Quran and Hadith that lays down certain duties and penalties for Muslims.”<sup>6</sup>

**Sunni and Shi’a/Shia:** two differing sects of Islam, rooted in differing beliefs about the prophet Muhammad’s successor; Sunni Muslims comprise the most traditional and largest branch of Islam (around 85 percent globally<sup>7</sup>).

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5. “Quran,” Dictionary.com, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/quran>.

6. “Sharia,” The Free Dictionary, <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/sharia>.

7. “Sunni and Shia Muslims,” Pew Research Center, January 27, 2011, <https://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/future-of-the-global-muslim-population-sunni-and-shia>.