

Original Title: الفتاوى الشرعية في القضايا العصرية

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Saudi Arabia's Permanent Council of Senior Scholars on the 1996 Khobar Bombings

All praise is due to Allāh alone and may He send prayers and peace upon the one after whom there will be no other prophet, Muhammad, and upon his family and companions.

The tenth meeting of The Permanent Council of the Senior Scholars of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia convened in the city of Taif on Saturday, 2/13/1417 Hijrah (corresponding to June 29, 1996) to review the bombing incident which occurred in the city of Khobar, in the Eastern Province, on Tuesday, 2/9/1417 Hijrah (corresponding to June 25, 1996) and what resulted of murders, destruction, and terror that afflicted Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

After reviewing this incident, The Permanent Council has unanimously come to the following conclusions:

First, this bombing is a crime forbidden by Islamic legislation as agreed upon by the main body of Muslims for the following reasons:

1. Such bombings are public displays of violating the sanctity of the basic rights that are well-known to be held sacred by Islam: the sanctity of innocent people, the sanctity of wealth, of safety and security, the lives of people safe and secure in their dwellings, and the sanctity of comfort. It infringes upon public well-being without which no people can live. What an enormous and horrible crime someone has committed against the sanctities of Allāh, of transgression against His servants, and terrorizing Muslims and others living among them. (About such a person we say) Beware,

beware of the punishment of Allāh and His recompense. Beware of supplications made against him. We ask Allāh to expose him and disclose his plots.

2. Islam's legislation protects every Muslim as well as anyone that their exists between them and the Muslims a trust, as Allāh says:

﴿ وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ﴾

And whoever kills a believer purposely, his recompense is Hell to reside therein forever, Allāh is angry with him, He curses him, and He has prepared for him a great punishment.

[Sūrah al-Nisā', 4:93]

And He (ﷺ) says about the rights of a non-believing resident living among Muslims if he is killed unintentionally:

﴿ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ فَدْيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ ﴾

And if he belonged to a people with whom you have a treaty of mutual alliance, then compensation (blood-money) must be paid to his family, and a believing slave must be freed.

[Sūrah al-Nisā', 4:92]

So, if a non-Muslim living under an Islamic government is killed by accident and yet he (his family) has the right of blood-money and expiation must be made in his case, then how about when he's killed intentionally?! Of course, the crime would be worse and the sin greater. It's also been authentically reported that Allāh's messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

مَنْ قَتَلَ مُعَاهِدًا لَمْ يَرِحْ رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ

“Whoever kills a Mu’āhad¹ won’t even smell the fragrance of paradise.”²

So, harming anyone who’s been guaranteed safety and security is not permissible, let alone killing him by such a horrendous attack like this. This is a very severe threat to whoever murders a Mu’āhad. It’s a major sin that has been condemned, its perpetrator threatened with not entering paradise. We seek refuge with Allāh from being forsaken.

3. This crime includes many things forbidden in Islam like treachery, treason, transgression, oppression, open sinning, and the terrorizing of Muslims and others. All these things are detested and hated by Allāh, His messenger, and all believers.

Second, after The Permanent Council has clarified the forbiddance of this criminal act, we then declare to the world that Islam is free of such crime and likewise any Muslim that believes in Allāh and the Last Day should also renounce and disassociate himself from this crime. It’s only the doing of those people deceitful in ideology, misguided in ‘Aqīdah (faith and conviction). Such a person bears the sin himself and the consequences of his crime. He should neither attribute nor associate in any way his action with Islam nor to the rightly-guided Muslims – those who adhere to the Quran and Sunnah, holding together collectively to the unbreakable rope of Allāh. It’s merely an act of corruption and crime renounced by all religious legislations and even by people’s basic inherent nature. For this reason, the texts have come clearly and explicitly forbidding such acts, warning one from befriending such people...

¹ Mu’āhad: A non-Muslim that there exists between him and the Muslims a treaty, trust, peace, or agreement. This agreement is even indicated by a government issuing an entry visa to enter the country. [T.N.]

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 3166) from the ḥadīth of ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Amr (رضي الله عنه).