

Is it Permissible to Kill the Khawārij?

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Question: Is it permissible (for individuals) to kill the Khawārij (extremists, terrorists, insurgents, etc.) if we know who they are and know how malicious they are?

Answer: No. Even when they revolted against ‘Alī (the fourth Caliph of Islam), he didn’t fight and kill them until after they actually began revolting, uprising against the leader. Other Muslim leaders, even if they were tyrants, used not to kill them unless and until they unsheathed their swords and began openly revolting and fighting (against the leaders and authorities).

So, they are only to be fought and killed (by legitimate authorities) once they unsheathe their swords (take up arms) and actually begin their revolt. Otherwise, there would be chaos – everyone going around killing each other. It’s only one of the Khawārij themselves who would say this.