

# Dying to Kill



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What motivates suicide bombers in Iraq and around the world? Can winning the hearts and minds of local populations stop them? Will the phenomenon spread to the United States? These vital questions are at the heart of this important book. Mia Bloom examines the use, strategies, successes, and failures of suicide bombing in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe and assesses the effectiveness of government responses. She argues that in many instances the efforts of Israel, Russia, and the United States in Iraq have failed to deter terrorism and suicide bombings. Bloom also considers how terrorist groups learn from one another, how they respond to counterterror tactics, the financing of terrorism, and the role of suicide attacks against the backdrop of larger ethnic and political conflicts. *Dying to Kill* begins with a review of the long history of terrorism, from ancient times to modernity, from the Japanese Kamikazes during World War II, to the Palestinian, Tamil, Iraqi, and Chechen terrorists of today. Bloom explores how suicide terror is used to achieve the goals of terrorist groups: to instill public fear, attract international news coverage, gain support for their cause, and create solidarity or competition between disparate terrorist organizations. She contends that it is often social and political motivations rather than inherently religious ones that inspire suicide bombers. In her chapter focusing on the increasing number of women suicide bombers and terrorists, Bloom examines Sri Lanka, where 33 percent

of bombers have been women; Turkey, where the PKK used women feigning pregnancy as bombers; and the role of the Black Widows in the Chechen struggle against Moscow. The motives of individuals, whether religious or nationalist, are important but the larger question is, what external factors make it possible for suicide terrorism to flourish? Bloom describes these conditions and develops a theory of why terrorist tactics work in some instances and fail in others.

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