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Letter to the editor authored by Ishaan Gardee, CAIR-CAN executive director

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## The meaning of 'jihad'

**Re: But What About Calls For 'Jihad'?, letter to the editor, Jan. 10.**

Letter-writer Kyle Matthews of The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies calls on the Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) to explain the religious meanings of jihad and its obligations. I would point him to the RCMP's publication *Words Make Worlds*, which offers a succinct analysis of the term, and the contemporary deviation of its original meaning as primarily defining a personal struggle to overcome personal shortcomings and come nearer to God.

Further to this personal struggle, one can struggle to promote justice in one's own community, or defend oneself against oppression or attack. However, there is no justification for aggression or indiscriminate violence anywhere in the Koran, and even in defensive battle, the Prophet Muhammad forbade the killing of all non-combatants. He additionally forbade attacks on places of worship, cutting down of trees and called for the humane treatment of prisoners.

*Ishaan Gardee, executive director,  
Canadian Council on American-Islamic  
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