



REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
PRIME MINISTRY
PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
HIGH BOARD OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

RELIGIOUS EXPLOITATION AND GULEN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

EXTRAORDINARY RELIGIOUS COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

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PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN

PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
OPENING SPEECH FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY RELIGIOUS COUNCIL
(03 August 2016, ANKARA)

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Mr. Speaker of the Parliament,

Esteemed Guests,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I salute you with my sincerest feelings, with fondness, and with reverence:

May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be with you.

I hope that good things will come out of the Extraordinary Religious Council held by the Presidency of Religious Affairs.

I offer my gratitude to all scholars, clerics, and experts who will contribute to the council with their opinions, evaluations, and propositions.

I thank the Presidency of Religious Affairs, an institution at the behest of the nation and in the service of the clear religion of Islam, for holding this important meeting.

Dear Brothers and Sisters;

As is known, our country has experienced very important developments in the last three years.

The armed coup attempt we suffered on the night of July 15 was the bloodiest and daring part of this process.

At the center of these developments, which closely concerned our survival as state and nation, was the Fetullahist Terror Organization which was disguised as a religious organization, a community, an institution offering education services.

Actually, it was because of its identity that made those religious values stand out which enabled this treacherous organization to live in our society for 40 years like a cancerous cell, like an infectious virus.

We would hear it from time to time; people would say “they are not an armed group.” And we would reply, “You are wrong. They are an organization that will use weapons in the best way when the time comes.” They would ask “How?” And we said, “Look, this is a group organized inside our Armed Forces and they have the character to point those weapons at this nation when it is time.” They did not believe it. They would not believe it. Of course we were not at the point of saying this openly on platforms at the time. These were talks we held in private meetings. And when it turned out to be true, those friends came and said “You were right.”

Esteemed Scholars, Dear Brothers and Sisters;

Our nation protected, looked after, and supported this group and acted on good will towards them, like it did to any group regardless of disposition that said “Allah”, that said “Prophet”, that fulfilled their religious obligations, that worked to earn good deeds, that at least seemed like that.

Since the single party era and for a long time, there was a period in when there was a completely wrongful crackdown on religious communities using state opportunities because of the “reactionism paranoia”. Like every other group, this organization too continued to exist under the wings of our nation during that period.

The late Mr. Özal, Mr. Demirel, and Mr. Ecevit, and even we, despite being politicians and statesmen from different ideologies, supported this group in good faith.

I will be honest; despite the fact that there were many aspects I disagreed with, I also helped them like every other segment thinking we could meet on a common ground.



I enabled this group to benefit from our effort to bring all previously ostracized and marginalized segments to the center, which was described as the “periphery” by Şerif Mardin.

Despite all our hesitation about the person and staff at the top of this organization, we tolerated them for the sake of the non-formal education, charity, and solidarity activities they seemed to be carrying out inside and outside the country. We tolerated them because they said “Allah.” We thought we had something common. But believe me, we did not and could not see for a long time that this organization, which we regarded as a different path to the same destination, actually was the tool, means, and cover for entirely different intentions and sneaky plans.

As a matter of fact, I had many senior executive friends with whom I have shared this observation since 2010. And our attitude changed naturally as of that year. Especially after 2012, we clearly revealed our reservations about the organization.

I had serious doubts about the escalating operations and cases directed at Turkish Armed Forces personnel at the time. And I shared them with their officials.

The reasons for the arrests and charges brought against some generals, whom I had known very closely and with whom I had worked for many years, were not convincing me.

Similarly, I was seriously disturbed by the concentration of power obtained by members of this group in the public and private sectors and by their attitude which did not allow the survival of people who were not affiliated with them.

However, I had difficulty explaining the issue even to my own friends at the time.

The 17-25 December coup attempt we saw in 2013 was a move in which this treacherous group revealed its true face so starkly for the first time. I could not even share this with many friends. When it was all out there, we were part of plot that had me at the top of the organization. Our current Prime Minister Mr. Yıldırım was below me and so were our Energy Minister, my son, and a couple of businessmen that you also know. Many friends still would not believe even when I told them about it. They said they would not do something like that. That they were taking the steps towards a crucial operation. I know that there are people who still do not believe it. Unfortunately, there are people who look but still cannot see. From this point on, esteemed scholars, the period of “doubt” is over; the period of “fighting back” has started.

I must emphasize this; if it had not been for the measures we took after December 17-25, especially the precautions we took in the judiciary, this coup d'état attempt would have probably been a much greater threat including not only a group of terrorists in the Armed Forces

but also other elements of bureaucracy like the police, the judiciary. Despite everything, I am deeply sorry for not being able to reveal the true face of this treacherous organization before. I know we have to answer to the Almighty and to our nation for that. May the Almighty and my nation forgive us.

Dear Brothers and Sisters;

In the words of our beloved Prophet, a Muslim is someone who “shows gratitude when something good happens, and shows patience when something bad happens.” Because it is better for them.

July 15 was one of the greatest troubles in our recent history that we suffered as a nation.

Thankfully, we have repulsed it as 79 million people altogether with the fight we put up with patience, with courage, with resolve, and with sagacity.

Without a doubt, the night of July 15 was a dark one but the following morning ended up being just as bright.

Now, it is time to bring to justice the people responsible for this heinous attack towards our country and nation, and it is also time to examine things.

You know how a so-called professor, a sorry excuse of a professor said the people would not go out into the streets and it was not like what people thought. They did not know this nation well enough. They did not embrace this nation’s spirit. But I did believe in my nation. And for I believed in them, I called my nation to squares and to airports. I said I would be with them, I said I would join them and not go to Rhodes or other places. And thank Allah, when we landed at Istanbul Atatürk Airport and got to the apron, I saw how tens of thousands of people swarmed the terminal in just three hours. This nation is a great nation. Praise Allah, this nation is surely powerful in faith. I see no other example and the history of coups will write this nation on a different note. Their story will be told differently. Because there is no other nation anywhere else that will stand up with flags against weapons, F-16s, F-4s, and tanks.

Some people lump this organization together with PKK terrorist organization. How so? PKK does not even have proper weapons. But FETO, the Fetullahist Terrorist Organization, rained bullets and bombs on its nation with F-16s, F-4s, tanks, shells, and helicopters bought with taxes of the nation. They already act together when they need; they act together with PYD, with PKK. We went through that during election campaigns. We know how they were together in election offices, especially from their outfits. We knew and saw they were together in election offices, turning their back on us. It was obvious where, with whom, and how they



would act. They had many faces. But there is no more explanation or excuse for the members of this organization to still be there despite the legal and security scandals during December 17-25; the injustice, the blackmails, the many disgraces unearthed in the meantime, and the horror they witnessed on July 15.

Brothers and Sisters;

The Almighty enjoins in the Holy Quran that the mischief-makers who do not know what they are doing call themselves “reformers.” This is exactly the case for this organization.

I proclaim from this hall: From now on, anyone who continues to lend an ear to the delusion of the charlatan, the terrorist leader in Pennsylvania is considered to have accepted beforehand what will happen to them.

Of course, the most important trait of this organization is their two-facedness under the name of “precaution” and “dissimulation” and making lies, hypocrisy, wearing a mask all the time, and turning soullessness into a habit for its members.

Their twisted cause has become a religion for those who would say “it’s raining” when you spat on their faces, who would keep silent even when you insulted their most sacred values, and who do not even have any respect for their own family privacy.

But this religion is about oneness and it enjoins a certain believer profile.

What kind of a person who has a cause denies the commands of the religion they adhere to? Notice that I am not saying “neglects.”

When a treacherous network uses religious motifs, can it be enough to absolve them and make them look innocent?

All the deviants of the world are sincere in their beliefs.

The fact that members of Fetullahist Terror Organization are sincere in their loyalty to this structure and that they accept everything they are told without questioning proves that they are not right and they are on the wrong path in religious terms.

The Holy Quran enjoins us dozens of times to use our minds. It asks us “if we ever think or reason.” It commands us to do so. There is nothing left to do for a person who has submitted their mind and will to not Allah but to a mortal being, a mortal one living in America even, and who still does not question themselves. If we will be together with our loved ones, then everyone is free to go their own way.

We have done our duty of warning for years. We described them as faith at the bottom, trade in the middle, and betrayal at the top. I am starting to even doubt about the “faith at the bottom” part. Why? Because there are still people who are anxious to do that. Why? Because I look with suspicion at a person who submits their mind, their conscience, their everything to such a charlatan, I suspect them because of how the Almighty asks “Don’t you reason?” in the Quran as I have said earlier. From now on, it is time to fight in every sense, it is time to call them to account in every sense.

I also have to say this: Since hypocrisy runs in the blood of this organization, we have serious doubts about those who say they are regretful.

Do they regret it now? I am not saying this in a vengeful manner. Do they really have regrets? Or are they being hypocrites which is the trademark of the treacherous network they are in? We are having difficulty understanding it. Of course we will say what really matters is what they say. Sorry but we will not lower our guard all the way down against these people. Because you cannot hurt a believer on the same spot twice.

Dear Brothers and Sisters;

Theft is bad. But the greatest theft is robbing people’s religion, faith, sincerity, and hope. As the biggest network of thieves in history, Fetullahist Terror Organization stole the past and future of tens of thousands of people.

There were many groups like that in history. As I have been saying for many years, one of the most striking examples is Hassan-i Sabbah of Islamiliyya who founded the Hashashin.

The Hashashin, like most of the Fetullahist Terror Organization members, were well-trained, had good careers, managed to conceal themselves for years, and were committed to absolute obedience to their leader. Those were the Hashashin.

It did not stop the same people from turning into assassins, murderers, suicide bombers when the time came and their leader gave the order.

Now, the same things are being said about FETO members.

It is true that they committed murders that remain unresolved. It is all coming to light. Our faith says death of a person is death of the entire humankind. So, can you expect anything else from those who rain bombs on their citizens with F-16s and F-4s? The Grand National Assembly of Turkey was bombed. The Presidential Palace was bombed. I talked about it in a few places; a female citizen’s head was cut off from her body and we found it on the roof of the Congress Center. What kind of savagery is this? Does it have a place in our religion? Who



are you killing? They randomly dropped bombs on the crowd over there; 5 martyrs, 3 from the same family. And one of them is the female citizen. But despite that, when we talked to their family nobody said “What happened?” They still say they will sacrifice their lives for this cause. This can only be said for a cause, for a belief. It is not that simple. 238 martyrs and nearly 2200 injured are not a casual incident.

I call them in the evening. I called one of them the other night. Only 10 centimeters of flesh is left on his left arm, the rest was torn off. I thought he would be mournful. A brother of ours from Gümüşhane. But he is talking all cheerful, asking me “How are you, Mr. President?” He says hearing my voice was enough. He ends the conversation and says he has an 88-year-old mother who wants to hear my voice even if she cannot see me. He says he would be delighted if I could speak to his mother. And we talk on the phone. It is as if her son did not lose an arm; she still gives me advice, practically giving me psychologic treatment. “How are you, Mr. President?”

There is also a colonel, his body was riddled with bullets. 7 of them. But he is high-spirited, too. He fought the coupists at Topkule Barracks in Istanbul, he fought to stop the tanks. And I see that he has the same mindset; saying “don’t think about us, they are not done yet.” He tells me there are still lots of them in the army. He tells me not to be mistaken. He tells me to look out for myself. Thank Allah, when we have such a nation, when we have a nation standing up to tanks, a nation that advances upon them fearlessly and tirelessly, we will pull through this crisis and bring our country to a much better place in the race of civilization.

Whoever ignores the bloody, hateful, spiteful, brutal face of this organization and still talks about education, charity, schools, and service either cannot use their reason, cannot see anything, or has their heart on their side. For that reason, we seized all their schools. We had to. And we transferred all of them to universities that were their reference.

Similarly, as you know we shut down all military high schools in the Armed Forces. From now on, students from all high schools, vocational schools, and equivalent schools can enroll in war colleges. And we have founded the National Defense University under war colleges. The military academies have been shut down. Instead, for example the air force academy, the naval academy, the military academy provided undergraduate education, and we took a step to reform it and make the National Defense University a university that offers graduate education.

We have also brought the Gendarmerie under control of the Interior Ministry as you know. We have turned the Gendarmerie system into the same system of the police. And the employee personal rights, records, etc. of the Gendarmerie will be handled by the Interior Ministry.

We took the steps about the latest infrastructure last night. Guys in the whole Gendarmerie community will start working at their new posts in 48 hours. It used to happen on August 30 every year. We canceled that. The working period in the entire Armed Forces will begin in a few days.

Since December 17-25, some would constantly say a certain thing. People would come and we would talk. They would say "Please Mr. Prime Minister..." of course it was when I was the Prime Minister. "...please do not let it go too far." This is what they always told me.

Going too far is attributing innocence to these murderers who killed 238 innocent people and wounded 2197. We will see about that.

Going too far is darkening the minds and souls of so many people and dehumanizing them!

Showing mercy to the cruel is cruelty to the oppressed. We need to know that.

Based on this experience, Turkey needs to question itself and pull itself together on issues like religious life and religious organizations as in every field.

The President of Religious Affairs definitely delivers great speeches all the time, but the one he gave today was more different and more meaningful. I thank him for that. And I say that our Diyanet community, which has as many as 100,000 employees, should not deal with this issue in private. We should know that Fetullahist Terror Organization is not the only one on our target, the separatist terror organization is also there. You see, 7 police officers were martyred in Bingöl. And 6 soldiers before that were martyred by PKK terrorist organization. We need to keep on decisively fighting them. I do not believe that our Kurdish brothers and sisters will do this terrorist organization any credit. We are brothers and sisters in this country with Turks, with Kurds, with Arabs, with the Laz, with Circassians, with the Romani, with Bosniaks, with Albanians. But who is going to work it out in the most ideal way? I believe that the opinion leaders and especially the imams and muezzins in the region will do that.

If the azans and the salas had not been heard from minarets on the night of July 15, the spiritual atmosphere would have been incomplete. What happened to the spiritual aspect after they were heard? It grew stronger. As you know some were disturbed by it. A muezzin was attacked in Izmir. Because that kind of people exist. But we will advance on our path decidedly. Because we believe that "the azans, and their testimonies are the basis of religion" and we will advance accordingly. Then, this calamity has been an opportunity for us. We must launch a process altogether that will utilize 1400 years of experience in the best way, check ourselves all over, make up for shortages, and correct our mistakes. If we do not do it right now, we will continue dealing with similar deviances tomorrow. We owe it to our nation



that walked without blinking an eye towards tanks, helicopters, and jets on the night of July 15 upon hearing the sound of salas. This is such a glorious nation. We must look out for all material and spiritual aspects of our country. We need to unite under the banner of tawheed and wahdat against any religious, ethnic, or ideological threat that shows signs of turning into a center for sedition and mischief.

I believe that the council will be a platform where these issues will be brought up, examined, and debated.

I would like to thank in advance for your contributions. Congratulations to those who contributed to holding this meeting. I wish Allah's mercy upon all the martyrs, I wish patience to the families. I wish recovery to our veterans from the Almighty. May Allah help us and be with us.

We will keep on walking with firm and safe steps. But we should know that: The West has never been with us during the process. The West has sided with the coupists. They did not take sides with the government of this country that stood out against a coup d'état. They cannot be trusted and you know quite well about it from the divine decree. I heard a nice saying from an elder. He was sick and I paid a visit to him. He is deceased now. He said, "If they have jets, tanks, and artillery, we have Allah." That's true, we have Allah. Of course we have tanks and artillery too. Those scoundrels were in our Armed Forces, but we also have generals, officers, and soldiers in there who stood up firmly against them, who have honor, who are patriots, and who love their nation. I want you to know that. They passed the test of defying the coupists in the best way.

I offer my respects to you with sincerest gratitude. Take care of yourselves. May Allah help us and be with us.



PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKER İSMAİL KAHRAMAN

PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
OPENING SPEECH FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY RELIGIOUS COUNCIL
(03 August 2016, ANKARA)

Mr. President,

Esteemed Guests,

Members of the Council,

I salute you all with respect.

July 15 was a dark day. I would like to express my wish to recover from this all together and never suffer anything like this again.

July 15 was a dark day. I would like to express my wish to recover from this all together and never suffer anything like this again. I believe that the council you are holding in such extraordinary circumstances for our country will be beneficial. For that, I would like to congratulate the esteemed Prof. Dr. Mehmet Görmez, our President of Religious Affairs, and his respected colleagues.

I would like to wish success to all members of our Diyanet community in their beneficent work. Held with an accurate decision immediately after the bloody coup attempt initiated by FETO, the Fetullahist Terror Organization, I believe this council will offer guide and hope for our future with the work it will carry out within the framework of unity against religious exploitation, solidarity, and perspective for the future.

Our Honorable President;

We are going through extraordinary days after the coup attempted by traitors disguised as soldiers connected with the Fetullahist Terror Organization which intends to put a sack over our nation's and government's head by exploiting Islam, the last and most perfect religion. We have managed to stop before falling off the edge with Allah's blessing. Just when we are about to fall into a bottomless pit, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's supreme bravery and faith, and our nation's belief and effort saved our country from a colossal disaster. The nation defeated the coup. People showed their appreciation of democracy, and the coup was averted. And our nation became one through that effort. All the non-governmental organizations came together and a watch for democracy has commenced in the streets. The media sided with democracy and joined in on the historic victory against the coup. Our President's call to go out, pour into the streets, and stand up against the enemies of the nation and state was the beginning of everything.

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the representative of our nation, the place where national will manifests itself, earned the title of veteran for the second time. From the moment the coup attempt started, we came together and spent the night at our Parliament. Regardless of political party, we became the voice of our glorious nation in the same spirit and faith under the sound of bombs and weapons. Our parliament members swarmed the Parliament even though it was not a session day. On Saturday, July 16, all the parties in parliament declared with a joint declaration their commitment to democracy and rule of law and that they would never allow any coup.

The members of this inauspicious, abominable, treacherous group pointed the people's jets, helicopters, and weapons at people. They bombed our Parliament, the heart of the nation; they sprayed it with bullets. They killed and injured their fellow citizens, their own brothers and sisters, and our own brothers and sisters. The people used their chest as armor against the bullets. As the late Ali Ulvi Bey said:

Tear down the tower of impiety, with rocks like a raging flood. Take a bullet or fall a martyr in this battle.

We have martyrs. May they rest in peace. Condolences to our nation, to the families, and to all of us. They are now neighbors of the Prophet. I wish a swift recovery and a long life to our veteran, our injured citizens.

Had the terrorists reached their goals on the night of July 15, we could have floundered in poverty and ruins, devoid of sunlight in dark tunnels; we could have suffered the sorrow of



watching those tearing apart our country advance toward their goal. May the Almighty bless the children of our nation who brought light to that nightmare of a night.

Our Honorable President;

We have narrowly escaped an enormous disaster. There is a nice picture that our nation created through this calamity; Turkey is no more a country of coups from now on. Allah willing, there will never be another idea of a coup attempt. Because the people stood up, refused to bow down, and does not want the collapse of a system they have embraced.

Now, it is time to bind up the social, political, economic, psychological, and military wounds caused by a lunatic who unashamedly calls himself Muslims, who has put his mind and service at the disposal of imperialism. We will make this effort. I believe and hope that it will not take a long time.

On July 15, the putchists who wanted to decapitate us forgot that Allah is the only victor. They did not and could not know that Allah Almighty had a plan against theirs. Ultimately, the shackles they wanted to put on our nation's feet got tied on their own feet. Everybody has a share in this achievement. We put up a resistance at the Grand National Assembly, our clerics at mosques and minarets, our police in the streets, and our citizens everywhere; we gave a democracy lesson to the whole world.

The entire nation was awakened with the cries of azan and sala rising from the minarets. Thank Allah that our nation has a very strong character. Despite all the sedition and mischief, they failed to hurt our people's feeling of commitment to their faith, their flag, and their homeland.

Our Honorable President;

We all have a big responsibility. We have a religion to protect, we have a nation and a world to which we must explain our religion in the most accurate way. We have to explain our religion in the best way possible without deceiving or getting deceived. Everybody has a responsibility to avoid a repeat of what we went through and to ensure that future generations live in safety. We must fulfill our responsibility without leaving anything cracks. Otherwise, some charlatans will again fill those cracks and others who call themselves "imams of the universe" will continue their abuse.

We are the Ummah of our great leader, the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) who once said "Knowledge is the lost property of the believer. He takes it wherever he finds." And as you know, the first command communicated to us through him in the Quran was "ikra (read)."

We are people obligated to know the Almighty and His commands. We are supposed to be informed. We should never forget that an uninformed Muslim is someone walking in a dark tunnel without a torch. A Muslim unable to shed light on his path with knowledge is a Muslim doomed to be deceived. There are many Muslims today in our country and in the world getting deceived in this way.

Of course, we should not content ourselves with talking about yesterday alone. We should share the lessons we have taken from our experience to make sure that the same thing never happens in the future. Everyone, in support of the national will, regardless of who they are, must act with a great sense of responsibility. Our intellectuals, clerics, authors, and artists should be aware of the responsibility they have. And also, we surely need to take the necessary lessons to avoid falling into the same trap with FETO. Turkey is a crucial country of not just the Islamic world, not just the Turkish world, but of the entire world. I think that as history of the world cannot be written without us, its future will not happen without us, either. For that reason, we need to be good, alert, and cautious; we need to prepare ourselves accordingly for the future. One of the biggest issues that mislead Muslims is neglecting quality in arguments about quality versus quantity. We need to make up for that. A handful of people took over the civil service, the judiciary, and the military ranks and staged a coup attempt. If it had not been for the fact that we opened our eyes at the last minute and for the fight our Honorable President put up single-handedly since 2010, that handful of scoundrels would have been ruling the country like the Ba'athists in Syria. Our country would have come to the edge of partition and the whole world, the world of Islam, an entire world expecting hope from us would have been desperate.

Mr. Professor Asef Hadjiyev, Secretary General of PABSEC, paid a visit. It was a visit to wish us to get well and show us support. He kissed our flag three times, put it on his head, and said: "We pulled through. Not just you, we all did." It is the view that gives us hope. There are remarks from various statesmen and governments in that way. Allah bless them, too.

The state was saved, history was made with our nation, and the duality in state was ended. I hope we never see days like that again.

Let us not forget that Anatolia is our home and it is our duty to ensure our home is safe. It would be misleading to ensure safety just with police and military measures. Things like social security, religious politics, psychological safety are issues that we must accentuate. When we neglect the social and psychological aspect of safety, we find bombs raining on us from F-16s which we boasted about when we once saw them flying in the sky. We have a common future just like we have a common past. We cannot build a future for ourselves by



establishing tutelage over one another without legitimacy. Muslims cannot build their future by establishing influence over each other.

We do not consider those who rained bombs on us on July 15 Muslims just like how the savagery DAESH commits in Iraq, Syria, and in other countries of the world is not approved in the name of Islam. Terror and violence cannot be the language of Muslims. No deed can succeed without approval of the nation. Those who were crazed enough to bomb the Presidential Complex and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey had actually no goal of succeeding. The real goal was to incite chaos and turmoil. That is, their aim was to incite internal conflict and make Turkey vulnerable to partition. Thankfully, they did not succeed in that. They failed, but our job has just started. The thing we need to do now to make sure these nests of malice do not come alive again is to focus on material and moral progress and never neglect the latter. We must raise youths and generations that are loyal to their spiritual roots for a safer and more peaceful tomorrow. It must be our goal to create our own golden generation and make Anatolia the center of the world once again. We need to accomplish the mission that is expected from us.

The coup attempt we suffered has also lifted the curtain over our eyes. A majority of people just became illuminated at this point. And there were people waking up from their sound sleep. Hopefully, tomorrow will be better for us.

I hope that the council meeting and its resolutions and studies will bring good results. May Allah grant you success and keep us away from such dark days. May Allah Almighty never let any harm to our state and nation. May Allah bless everybody who helped prevent this darkness. I wish Allah's mercy upon our martyrs again. A swift recovery and a long life to our veterans, to our injured citizens.

I salute you all again with respect, with fondness. May Allah's peace, compassion, and abundance be upon you.



DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PROF. DR. NUMAN KURTULMUŞ

PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
OPENING SPEECH FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY RELIGIOUS COUNCIL
(03 August 2016, ANKARA)

Mr. President

Mr. Parliamentary Speaker

Mr. President of Religious Affairs, and Former Presidents of Religious Affairs

Esteemed Scholars

I salute you all with my sincerest feelings. May Allah's peace, grace, benevolence, mercy be upon all of you and upon our country.

I wish that the Extraordinary Religious Council, for which we came together after the coup attempt on July 15, will enable the sharing of opinions, ideas, and fatwas about the FETO terrorist organization with Turkey's public and with the Islamic world.

First of all, I would also like to thank our Honorable President once again with gratitude and reverence, who appeared before the nation in the hardest moments of the dark night on July 15 without a single sign of concern or hesitation on his face, who called the nation to streets to protect their democracy and rights, and who helped make a turning point in Turkish history with exemplary heroism and bravery.

Both Mr. President and I know what it means to praise a person in their presence in our faith. I am saying it to give credit where it is due; if he had felt in his heart even the tiniest bit of concern or hesitation in his remarks while calling the nation to streets in that speech, our nation would not have been able to respond with the same enthusiasm and demonstrate such courage in the streets.

We know that people climbing on tanks made history with that bravery and spirit upon the call of our Commander-in-Chief, our President.

Each and every one of us heard stories of heroism about our martyrs at battlefronts at Çanak-kale, in the War of Independence, at Allahuekber Mountains, at Tripoli, at all fronts. We all saw this is a nation of heroes on the night of July 15. We proved once again that we are a glorious nation that stood up to tanks, blocked tanks with cars, and used their chest as armor. Praise Allah. I wish Allah's mercy upon the martyrs. May each one of them rest in peace and have a sublime place in heaven.

I would also like to express my gratitude to thousands of veteran citizens who went out to be martyrs that day. We have no doubt that they have done a deed as great as martyrdom. Millions of people who poured into streets, each one of them, went there thinking "We are martyrs if we fall, and we are veterans if we don't." We believe that Allah will reward them in the same way.

Esteemed Guests,

The issue we will discuss in this council has a historic significance. From the Khawarij to the Fedayeen of Hassan-i Sabbah, the world of Islam saw many betrayals and witnessed periods when people with deviant beliefs tried to betray them from within. But, and I say this without exaggeration, from the first days of Islam and first moments of apostasy history, this was the most well-organized and the most despicable act of apostasy ever seen in the world of Islam. This movement needs to be revealed in all aspects.

Make no mistake: our government and our state will find and catch everyone in relation with this treacherous network. They will all answer for what they have done. All of them and particularly FETO will regret doing it. This is the duty of the government and state. But the responsibility of our religious community, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, and religious scholars through the Religious Council is to wipe away these treacherous nations from the history and ideas of Islam and to dump them in the waste yard of history.

I would like to also express my hope that the two-day extraordinary religious council, our meeting here, will yield good results. Yes, it is a belated meeting. I wish we as religious



authorities and clerics had revealed the twisted notions of these people before their act of treachery. We could then have prevented tens of thousands of innocent people from joining this deviant group. Now, we have to take lessons from the past and work hard and carefully to wipe away those with similar ideas from the philosophy of Islam.

Our Honorable President,

If you would indulge me, I consider it a duty as a way of contributing to the discussions here to outline certain fundamental deficiencies, especially the ontological and epistemological ones of this group which are crucial.

Firstly, we are the believers of Allah Almighty who starts addressing with “O you who have believed” or “O mankind” and the believers of His religion. This group ontologically trespassed on this area basically. By eliminating the notion of Muslim unity and equality, they identified only those loyal to their community as believers while identifying others as “muallafa al-qulub” at best, even labeling a major portion as apostates. This is not something new. We know that this group has acted as such for years and ruled out one of Islam’s most basic principles by eliminating equality among believers.

The second important issue is the matter of “publicity.” It is the fact that all the beliefs and teachings of Islam are completely public especially after Prophet Muhammad’s time in Makkah. In that sense, the common trait of madrasas and lodges, the two fundamental institutions of the Islamic tradition in this land, is that they are open to public. However, this group opened their “houses of light” in an expurgatory way; in a manner of speaking, they wiped away the principle of publicity, a fundamental one in Islam, and turned these places into masjid al-dirar. For years, they managed to distance Muslims away from the unity of mosques unfortunately. So, we can say that they were a so-called religious group that appeared as a modern masonry organization with their concealed and mysterious organization model. We now see that side more clearly but it needs to be exhibited more publicly.

Thirdly, their biggest ontological destruction is the idea that “their leader is innocent.” It is obvious for us that nobody other than prophets are entitled with the title “Pure.” But they did tremendous mistakes through the years by claiming via their most public means that their leader is innocent and even impeccable. In that way, we can say that they have acquired the pharaoh mentality. As you know, one of the most significant characteristics of a pharaoh was that they thought they could do no mistake and their deeds were free of questioning.

Another important ontological point is the extremely perverse notion of interfaith dialogue which is against Islam. As we all know, Turkey’s religious authorities unfortunately did not give the necessary answer in that time against this group which defended that merely believ-

ing in Allah would be enough to get into heaven. The notion that saying “There is no god but Allah” is enough by itself, which constitutes the basis of interfaith dialogue, cannot be accepted in any way. Sometimes in their teachings, they gave the example of “There is no god but Allah, and Abraham is His friend” which the Ottomans had inscribed on a gate. The message in that and saying “There is no god but Allah” are totally different things. They combined the last religion of Allah with other religions and entered a process of apostasy by creating a new religion. They caused great delusion in the strictest sense of the word.

The first epistemological perversion of this group is that they considered other Muslims separate from themselves. Every single one of us comes from a tradition in which the people of the qibla cannot be declared unbelievers and a person is considered a believer even if a single deed of theirs amongst hundreds points to faith. However, even if a person had 99 signs of being a believer, they did not consider that person a member of Islam within their circle unless the person was from them. They did not see others as fellow believers within the framework of Islamic law.

Their second biggest epistemological perversion is that, as a crucial trait separating them from the main body of the people of Sunnah, they adopted dissimulation as an integral part of faith. We all probably know that they are an organization that has followed the same style not since today, not since yesterday, but for forty years while one of the most fundamental characteristics of the people of the Sunnah is never concealing one’s faith except when under duress and never denying Allah. In other words, dissimulation is clearly and absolutely rejected and forbidden except in fear of death. But it was one of the major elements at the center of both their faith and organization.

Lastly, I would like to say this about their epistemological perversions: this group was full of such great mistakes and shortcomings in terms of philosophical system for years; but unfortunately they committed their biggest mistake, ultimately surpassing all the previous ones, by turning into a treacherous network.

“Someone who kills one kills the entire humankind.” It is one of Islam’s clearest and most widely known principles. These vile people murdered 241 innocent people. This Feto and the reckless people at his disposal like the Fedayeen of Hassan-i Sabbah killed 241 citizens and made plans to kill more. Allah destroyed all their plans and plots. I would also remind you that “A Muslim’s blood, life, property, and honor are forbidden to other Muslims.” And they are explicitly in perversion for acting against this ruling and the hadith and the verses that establish it.



These murderers and slaughterers will be dumped into the dark waste yard of history as a dishonorable group that will be remembered as a disgrace in the history of Islam. It is without a doubt that they have inflicted a massive catastrophe on our nation and caused deep wounds in the mind of our nation. Now is the time to mend these wounds altogether.

I will be frank. We will never show mercy on anyone related or in contact with this group as we mend our wounds. Because bringing justice is only possible by showing mercy on the victim, not the perpetrator. Rest assured that no injustice or wrongdoing will be done to anyone who have no relation whatsoever to this group. Our duty as the government and the state is to wipe them away completely from the state within principles of justice and kick them entirely out of all government bodies. The duty of our Diyanet community and religious scholars in Turkey is to wipe them away from the entire history and philosophy of Islam, and to erase them from the mind and heart of the nation as a dark organization that has nothing to do with Islam. I believe the Religious Council will be functioning in that manner.

As I end my speech, I would like to once again thank our President for his courage and resolve, our nation for their bravery, sagacity, and fighting spirit, the non-governmental organizations, and the arduous efforts of political parties and especially the media on the issue. All that brought us to light in the morning of that dark night. I would also like to expressly offer my thanks to our Diyanet community who helped salas rise from minarets that night and helped our people take to the streets with immense spiritual peace and protect our democracy, homeland, flag, nation, and faith.

Allah bless everyone for their contribution. May He never let our nation go through such dark days. I hope that we may have a bright future.

Warm and kind regards.



PRESIDENT OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS PROF. DR. MEHMET GÖRMEZ

PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

“A Perspective for Unity, Solidarity and Future against
Religious Abuse and 15 July Coup Attempt” (03-04 August 2016 ANKARA)

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Endless gratitude to the Almighty Lord Who honored us by blessing us with Islam; Who bestowed upon us good sense, a clean heart, and sound strength as well as the Book and the Sunnah; and Who blessed us with the ability to distinguish between right and wrong!

Eternal salutations to our Beloved Prophet, Muhammad Mustafa (pbuh) who brought us the Book, who declared the Book with wisdom, and who turned that wisdom into a life well-lived!

Mr. President,

Esteemed Speaker of the Parliament,

Esteemed Members of the Religious Council,

Respected Scholars,

Dear Members of the Press,

Ladies, Gentlemen,

Before I begin, I salute you with love, respect, reverence, and fondness. May Allah’s peace, mercy, and abundance be upon you.

Mr. President,

I would like to offer you my sincerest gratitude in the name of council members and participants for honoring our Extraordinary Religious Council with your presence.

I would like to pray to Allah Almighty that the Extraordinary Religious Council titled “A Perspective for Unity, Solidarity and Future against Religious Abuse and 15 July Coup Attempt” may bring good results, and thank all participants in the name of our Presidency.

Mr. President, Esteemed Members of the Council,

As I start, I would like to wish Allah’s mercy upon our honorable martyrs who -in the face of a treacherous mob that was determined to darken the horizons of our country on the night of July 15- unwaveringly accepted at the first moment the invitation to protect the nation’s own honor and dignity like in the days of the War of Independence with the rise of salas from minarets, and attained the honor of martyrdom on this night of death. Their light brightened the horizon of our nation once again.

Brothers and sisters who were injured and became veterans will always be held dear by our nation and the Muslim Ummah. I wish from the Almighty a quick recovery to the injured, and salute them with the gratitude and reverence of our nation.

I would like to express our bliss to be members of a noble nation that set an example for the whole world with their dignified, brace, and high-minded stance against the treacherous and bloody coup attempt, and protected their homeland, their nation, the people’s will, and the rule of law.

I heartily congratulate all volunteers of religion –from the muftis and imams to muezzins and Quran instructors- who brought our mosques, our minarets, our salas and azans to our nation since the first moments of the dire hours on the night of July 15 to keep people’s spirit alive against junta members and treacherous networks. Thank Allah for granting us the salas that silenced coups when it was once coups that silenced azans.

Mr. President, Esteemed Members of the Council,

For the first time in our history, we as the Presidency are holding an Extraordinary Religious Council with a single agenda item. Because those who sowed seeds of sedition and malice in this land for 40 years inflicted the greatest damage not only on our country and nation but also on the clear religion of Islam with their bloody coup attempt.



Not only did this treacherous network make an assassination attempt at the entire existence of our nation, they also exploited our faith, our trust, our compassion, our mercy, our benevolence, our dignity, all the symbols and values of our religion and civilization, the knowledge, wisdom, foresight, and intelligence heritage of the Ummah, the nobility of sacrifice, charity, and solidarity, our religion, and our piety for enemy coin and turned it into anger in the eyes of our people as well as the humankind. What is more agonizing is the fact that this organization had been promoting its disposition to powerful customers of global political marketplaces with covers such as “moderate Islam, protestant Muslims, interfaith dialogue, tolerance, reconciliatory Muslims, etc.” but by attempting to kill our great homeland, our blessed Turkey and people by bombing our parliament, our cities, and our streets with the treason they committed on the night of July 15, they did not hesitate or felt no shame in translating its apparent disposition into the savagery of DAESH which created a bloodbath in Iraq and Syria. Not only did this abominable madness and atrocity ruined our property by using the people’s weapons and technology to drop bombs on people’s cities, it also dealt a blow on the most fundamental values and symbols of our religion and our people’s sentiment of solidarity and trust.

Mr. President, Esteemed Members of the Council,

We are deeply grieved to have so belatedly comprehended the wisdom in Allah’s warning in our Holy Book in “Be not deceived about Allah by the Deceivers!” with a bitter test both as a country and a nation, and as the Diyanet and Theology community.

It is because an ambition and infamy –having hidden behind innocent faces under the cover of supposedly serving the truth, the right path, and the nation, and having seemed to be benevolent under the guise of helping the innocent people of the nation- manifested itself on the night of July 15 as unfettered suffering and attack on the state, the nation, the cities, and everything we had in the name of civilization.

It attempted to murder people, assuming the form of untethered savagery. Using our hopes and yearnings for its goals with fake modesty and kind words, with tears and so-called religious advice, they equipped the people they took from the nation with secret intentions, absolute obedience, and a sneaky ability of infiltration.

This seemingly mild-mannered network of loyal robots deceived our people with Allah, His prophet, and His prophet’s companions. As a tool for their own secret intentions and goals, they used Allah’s verses, the hadith of His Messenger, the wisdom of ulama and the knowledge of scholars, and all the values of this land including Mawlana Rumi and Yunus Emre.

Pretending to be a religious community before our eyes, this Trojan horse not only prepared its inauspicious outcome by abusing religion, creating communities, and charity events, they

also deceived the oppressed regions of Muhammad's Ummah and all humanity as well as our country with the guise of serving the good cause and helping people; and they created big opportunities and fortune to serve evil powers.

This deception and destruction was not limited to our country. It also channeled the understanding of Islam –which would blossom in the civilization centers of Ma wara'un-Nahr after having gotten rid of the oppressive hegemony in Asia- into wrong places. It took hostage the Muslim minds to emerge in post-colonial period in the oppressed continent of Africa.

Mr. President, Esteemed Members of the Council,

Members of this terrorist organization showed with the madness and violence they launched on July 15 that the piety of those who do not reason and surrender their minds to others could drag not only themselves but an entire nation to disaster. They also showed that those who try to work their way up with political trickery despite gathering under the roof of religion will not hesitate to use their religion and morals as a form of deceit.

Islam is about worshipping in accordance with Allah's approval and serving humanity, by making religion about Allah only and not having any other deities. Islam does not accept any other innocent and undisputable authority, body, or guide other than the Prophet.

Nobody and no organization can see themselves as the representative of religion and demand people's absolute obedience and devotion. Religious guidance is a part of educational process only in terms of knowledge and morals; it does not entitle any other privilege.

In Islam, absolute obedience is only shown to principles the framework of which is set by the Quran and Sunnah. This organization resorted to unethical methods such as concealing one's self, seeming different than what they really are, being a hypocrite, speaking differently at different places, doing forbidden things as a tactic, using code names, having a different life contrary to one's beliefs, lying, inquiring about others, violating privacy, blackmail, and supplanting despite the fact that good character is the most basic value of our religion and despite our Beloved Prophet's saying, "I was sent to complement good character." However, none of these acts has any relation to Islam. They also cannot be explained by Islam's fundamental moral principle "A believer is someone from whom others are safe." It has turned out to be a big deception that all these were carried out under an educational volunteer movement based on love, tolerance, and fondness.

This organization tried to recruit children of this nation by firstly destroying their family ties; and then messed with their religious (Ummah) and national (nation) identities. Under no cir-



cumstance does Islam allow raising a type of people that is a hypocrite, has dual character, estranged from their own self without no personality or identity.

Mr. President, Esteemed Guests,

Another sin as grave as the others committed by this group was to ingratiate themselves into others' favor and seeking honor in their eyes saying "we have the Islam you like better" under the guise of tolerance, interfaith dialogue, etc., using the caricatured and demonized Muslim image with Islamophobia at a time when the wave of Islamophobia was rising in the West, instead of standing against it and elevating the honor of Muslims.

General principles of the relationship between Islam and other religions is set within the Quran and Sunnah, having been passed on to our day with exemplary practices throughout history. It is essential to live in peace without hurting religious liberties with people called People of the Book. Helping each other and showing solidarity is also possible on a common ground in every affair that will benefit humanity.

However, the attempt to create a shared cultural theology or a religious cultural union for the sake of dialogue is unacceptable. Furthermore, a relationship cannot be developed by tearing apart the word of oneness and ignoring the prophethood of Muhammad. Such an attitude cannot be condoned from a religious standpoint. Being a believer of Islam is only possible with acknowledgement of and faith in the entire Word of Oneness (Kalima Tawheed).

Mr. President, Esteemed Members of the Council,

Teaching Quran and Sunnah and telling people about their basic principles and morals is certainly a part of proselytization and edification. However, it is incompatible with Islam's universal principles to turn it into a network of power and interest, to make a material, political, and commercial structure out of it, and to make it open to all sorts of filthy relations. As deriving benefits and influence in the name of religion has no acceptable religious basis, standing against such organizations is also a moral and an Islamic responsibility.

In the proselytization and edification activities of Islam, people are called to join the path of Allah and the Prophet. There should be no invitation to join individuals in the name of Allah. Calling people to serve the servants using Allah's name is the greatest wrongdoing of all. Nobody can surrender their mind, will, and character to others. Nobody should follow a created being into rebelling against the Creator.

Structures established in the name of religion and in the name of Allah by exploiting people's religious sentiment are in stark contrast to Islam. These structures never resonated with Islamic communities throughout history.

Mr. President, Esteemed Members of the Council,

FETO terrorist organization which has been known to exist for years, which deemed everything permissible to reach their goals, which exploited religion and religious sentiment, which stole our people's zakat, charity, alms, and children using these sentiments, which usurped the basic values and concepts of our religion, which recruited people and created opportunities through un-Islamic and immoral acts and behaviors, with mischief, sedition, lies, and tricks; which infiltrated into all bodies of the state and tried to endanger the nation's future, and which was caught in the act by the nation in its recent coup attempt, cannot be considered a religious body. The leader of this group cannot be seen as a religious scholar and a religious mentor. This individual, who called leaders of the organization as imams and himself as imam of the universe, must be treated in accordance with the ruling, "He who kills one kills the entire humankind." An organization that rains bombs on people and murders innocent people all in one night cannot be associated with neither Islam nor humanity.

Mr. President, Esteemed Members of the Council,

Urgent matters to be addressed include combining our country's theological accumulation with our Presidency's experience, taking lessons from this painful incident, taking necessary measures against this and other similar bodies that exploit religion, determining current shortcomings and necessary steps to be taken including legal arrangements in the field of religious services, religious education, and religious teaching, doing our share as Theology and Diyanet community, check our recruitment mechanisms, offer healthy religious education to the public, and initiate necessary efforts to act according to Islam's universal principles in offering religious, charity, and social services.

I would like to bluntly state that the religious and academic silence is inexplicable in the face of this organization which plans to grasp and take over Turkey in all aspects. It is a matter of urgency to examine into the Diyanet community and into the academic activities in Theology Faculties about the issue. Moreover, it is a must for us as the Presidency to carry out thorough inspections and make arrangements regarding this terror organization that devoted itself to religious exploitation and bringing an end to this nation.

Mr. President, Esteemed Guests,

One of the most important issues is to see and understand the magnitude of nihilism into which our youth may be dragged in terms of religion and spirituality as a result of these traumatic developments, whether they are eager to learn about their religion and help with benevolent services or keep a distance from religion and spirituality or even stand against it. It is a divine responsibility now on our shoulders to avert the potential impact of this mali-



cious attack, which spared no expense in tarnishing religion and spirituality, that may cause young generations to be dragged into a deep crisis and depression in terms of religion. How can the youth trust people who give them religious advice from now on? How and why are these young souls going to believe, in the whirlpool of frustration and despair they have been thrown into by believing in those people, that Islam is a pure call for peace, justice, fellowship, and high morals that will protect them from nihilism they are likely to be dragged into? With what reliability and enthusiasm can we protect our youth from this dark pit? Resolutions of the Extraordinary Religious Council will be a guiding light to us in taking our youth out of the swirl of depression, crisis, and nihilism and to the sublime truth of Islam.

Mr. President, Esteemed Guests,

Now is the time to serenely contemplate after the reactions given in the heat of what we went through. It is a fact that we need common sense to prevent the period we have ahead from turning into an inextricable dissension. Only when it is crowned with high justice will the noble resistance of our nation have its place in history. As frequently emphasized by yourself, we can only overcome this with justice, not with revenge. I believe that with its power of consultation and reflection, our Religious Council will instill hope, composure, foresight, and fairness in all of us.

I would like to express our belief that our tomorrow will be much more beautiful than today. Eternal gratitude to Allah that this land has been the land of Muslims for centuries. This nation is the children of martyrs. The azans, the salas are symbols of Islam. This religion has a book in which not a single letter has ever been changed. This religion has a Prophet who is the ultimate greatest example for human beings. We have a mind and a heart given to us by Allah. We have unwavering values and vast experience of 14 centuries.

Our Honorable President,

I would like to express our deepest gratitude for your brave and honorable leadership against the coup on my behalf, on behalf of our nation, on behalf of thousands of religious officials who recited the sala in tears on that ominous night, and on behalf of the mosque community. I can say in the name of valuable scholars and professors who participate in this extraordinary meeting that better things for our future will come out of the disaster we have been through as a nation.

A gate of treason into darkness was shut never to be opened again. Allah bless you and our nation. Rest assured that the pious children of this nation that considers itself responsible against all humanity in the name of Allah's religion will quickly recover from this wound of treachery.

Without wounding our religion, our piety, our sacred values, and our nation, we will continue to serve our children and our youth, and to help generations that reject being servants to people and only serve Allah. As a society, we will better protect each other's rights and look out more for one another. We will take back all our values and sons and daughters that were stolen by FETO and other organizations that exploit religious sentiment and thought. There is not a single Muslim to be lost to terrorist organizations. There cannot be. We will continue walking on the unwavering path of Islam. Away from all extremism, rampancy, understatement, and esoteric interpretations; the Quran, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and our Islamic way of life that takes the Middle Path as the basis will continue to shed light on our path without waning or fading. May Allah always keep us and the entire humanity on the middle path.

As I conclude my words, I pray to Allah Almighty that He may guard our glorious nation against deep suffering, grave tests, and incurable wounds. May Allah the Exalted never let those who set their eyes on our unity and amity, and aim at our dignity and honor. May He save us from all sorts of internal and external mischief that could endanger the survival of our state and nation. May He grant our council to produce good results.

I sincerely salute you all and welcome you again.



COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS AND DETAILED EXPLANATIONS

After the bloody coup d'état attempt on 15 July 2016 by an organization that exploits religion (FETO/PDY), the Presidency of Religious Affairs held an emergency meeting for the Religious Council in Ankara on 3-4 August 2016, as per the Religious Council Regulation Article 5, with a single agenda item in order to evaluate the period we are going through as a country and a nation, to detect the damage inflicted on our country, our nation, and our religion by this and other similar organizations, to hold discussions on these matters from a religious standpoint, and to determine the concrete steps to be taken.

Setting an example for the entire world with their dignified, high-minded, and brave stance against the treacherous and bloody coup attempt and protecting their homeland, their people, their national will, and their rule of law; our glorious nation's honorable stand on the night of July 15 and our religious officials who kept spirits of the nation alive during the resistance will be remembered with gratitude for generations to come. I wish Allah's mercy upon our glorious martyrs who immediately accepted the invitation to protect the nation's own dignity and honor like in the days of the War of Independence and also I wish a quick recovery to our wounded veterans.

Attempting to overthrow by force of arms a legitimate government that is based on the people's will by organizing under the pretense of religion means disregarding the national will and usurpation of rights. It cannot be legitimized in religious terms. We vehemently and vigorously curse this attempt.

In the two-day Council, the agenda was discussed by the members, participants, and guests. Resolutions were unanimously accepted and found suitable to be shared with the public:

FETO/PDY CANNOT BE CHARACTERIZED AS A RELIGIOUS BODY

1. **Fetullahist Terror Organization (FETO/PDY), which deemed everything permissible to reach their secret and dark goals, which exploited religion and religious sentiment, which stole our people's zakat, charity, and qurban, which took away our people's sons and daughters and misguided them, which distorted and destroyed the basic values and concepts of our religion, which recruited people and created opportunities through un-Islamic and immoral acts and behaviors, with mischief, sedition, lies, and tricks; which infiltrated into all bodies of the state and tried to endanger the nation's future, and which was caught in the act by the nation in its recent coup attempt, cannot be characterized as a religious body. The head of this organization cannot be accepted as a "religious scholar" or "hocaefendi."**

Having gathered his first supporters around himself with the effusive sermons he delivered in his typical style and tone since the sixties, Fetullah Gülen then made a big effort in the field of education using the foundation of the Risale-i Nur, becoming more active with schools, dersane (cram schools), and study centers. However, it was eventually understood that behind these education activities lay the secret agenda of "capturing the most critical state institutions through its followers." Young minds who were picked for this and called "the golden generation" and "the second holy group" were brainwashed and assimilated into one character with hollow yet sentimental teachings by group members called "abi" (older brothers) and "abla" (older sisters). Therefore, the followers were trained as devoted militants and recruited into state institutions; they were taught how to conceal themselves for long years and programmed to act on his command when the time came. Fetullahist Terror Organization/Parallel State Structure (FETO/PDY) thus persistently followed its strategy of taking over both society and politics. It is estimated that this long-term political strategy took its shape with open intervention from foreign powers since 1986. As a matter of fact, in a so-called private conversation published on the Internet, Gülen had openly stated his philosophy:

"...

Be flexible, be in the lifelines without standing out. From that point, you should make use of the laws and rules within the flexibility I have talked about. Also, you should leave the impression that you are a man of law. They should think you are law-abiding people, that this is the thing that partly lies behind the regular promotions. And this is what lies behind your promotion to more vital, more crucial posts in the next period. Making your way up without letting others feeling your existence, i.e. without standing out, is important in certain key institutions like these two. Going further, walking in the lifelines,



and pulling back when necessary without taking any wounds or making any noise are very important matters for our future. Find out the key points of the system to walk toward the future.

... Another point is our friends working more conveniently whether at the courthouse or in civil service; whether being a district governor, a governor, an ordinary judge or an acclaimed one...

...

Do not resort to force if there is no balance of power. You will plan well, and execute accordingly. They will accuse us of being cowards from the outside. Allah will take care of us.

I prefer taking over rather than needless heroism.

There is a need for acting with extreme caution, wariness, and discretion. People in the service, people who want to serve must act like a diplomat that can manage the world; they must resolve the issues in their country after resolving the ones in their own plans.

Every step is an early step until the moment when we find our essence and reach maturity, until the moment when we become powerful enough to carry the world, until the moment when we obtain the things by which we represent that force; until the moment when we pull the power in all constitutional institutions in Turkey's state body to our side.

These houses are places of filling and discharging. People get filled here, then they discharge in the gaps... At a period when everything has been shut down and particularly all the doors have been sealed, these houses have undertaken a mission bigger than their previous one. Because some of the past functions of these houses are offered at a madrasa. Some are offered at a school. Some are offered at a lodge. Some are offered at a zawiya. However, when these houses were founded by the hand of one of the most honorable people in the world at the time, there was no more madrasas. The schools have been steered away from their missions. The lodges have been shut down. The zawiya doors have been locked with bolts. It is not possible to open those doors, to go through them. These houses were going to undertake this great mission and these heavy responsibilities. Allah granted it to happen. Allah allowed it to happen.

...

It is sad, but it is imperative that you avoid provoking the other side in all these and talk about what we read in a softer tone. After accomplishing that, consider what the world thinks about that specific issue, and do not take the final step before succeeding in all potential plans that may arise in separate platforms. A mistake will hinder us and we cannot make up for the defeat afterwards. We cannot afford it. They would tightly intern us. And they would never give us the chance to recover again...

What is being done here is settling accounts with the world on a micro basis. Settling the score with the world. These people who will do it are learning ways of doing it. This is training and education.

In all the crowd, I have told you about my thoughts and feelings in so-called privacy. I have done it by relying on your loyalty to privacy and sensitivity on privacy. I know that just like you throw those juice boxes in a trash can on your way out, you will also throw these thoughts in the trash can for the sake of being open. Do you understand me? Your secret is your captive. You will be held captive if you reveal it.

Our movement teaches it as a fundamental principle. We opened a house in those places. We are making our web with a spider's patience there, waiting for people to fall into the web on that day, telling things to them, showing them the ways to resurrection..."

In order to accomplish his secret goal, Gülen was able to assume a pragmatist stance depending on the time and the place, and developed a different narrative for each place. Looking back at his forty years of narratives and acts, it is seen that he can skillfully use numerous masks that can be considered Sunni, Alevi, Sufi, a Hurufi, radical, democrat, secular, anti-communist, liberal, humanist, dialogist, contemporary, modernist, nationalist, etc. In the cause of these secret goals, Gülen eventually came to order the execution of all sorts of things centering around discord and mischief which had nothing to do with the ethics of Islam. Originally a religious community, his movement became estranged in the process by turning into an organization with secret projects. As a matter of fact, some of the prominent figures in the skeleton crew who noticed this "marginalization" and "mobilization" left the movement and exposed what he really is.

According to the statements of those who saw the truth and left, the movement turned into a dirty, cell-type organization that could get in contact with foreign intelligence agencies; a body with a pyramid-style hierarchy of individuals connected to one another through international networks of interest. Serving Islam was not the goal; it was to gain worldly dominance in various countries, especially Turkey, in the name of dark powers. Indeed, Gülen had shown a long time ago how imaginative and ambitious he was by saying "Even if we conquer the entire world, without dwelling on it we must seek ways to conquer the heavens." The coup attempt that Gülen and his followers attempted by shedding blood in their native country, the murders they committed by unknown assailants, and the blackmails they imposed on different segments of society were the most obvious instruments. The religion mentioned in the organization's narrative and operations is merely a tool to execute their devious plans. Their leader deceived large masses with the initial promise of religious education, and ultimately gave immoral and inhumane orders that attempted to turn our country into a place of malice and mass killings by firing on civilians. He attempted to bring down state agencies and make



our country ripe for foreign invasion with the coup attempt he led at a critical time when we fought global terror organizations that targeted our country inside and outside.

The character of FETO members operating under the guise of religion largely matches the character of hypocrites (munafiqun) who lived in the Medina period. Indeed, verses about the hypocrites explain how these people are sick in the heart, malevolently trap believers, meet with sinister groups to accomplish their secret agenda and act together with them. Also according to these verses, they abandon the believers and befriend and work for non-Muslims with whom they secretly cooperate to work against Muslims. They claim it is for “peace.” They speak well enough to make people listen [Al-Baqarah, 2/8-15; 204-206; Al-Munafiqun, 63/2-4]. They hide themselves so well that even the Prophet can know their true face when Allah informs him [At-Tawbah, 9/101; Muhammad, 47/ 30].

Presenting itself initially as a movement of morality and education, the Gülen movement first turned into a religious cult, then into a terror organization. Indeed, various researchers describe its structure as “based on a messianic, charismatic, and authoritarian religious leadership, featuring strong hierarchy, employs open forms of organization but also has a concealed, idiosyncratic and complicated inner organization.” This sickly structure is not a religious community but a devious project of the global system. Therefore, a structure ruled and guided by a certain “superior mind” instead of the Quran and Sunnah, that cooperates with external powers and serves the secret goals of dominant forces can never be a religious association.

A more obvious proof is the fact that the organization which made a coup attempt on July 15 attacked with the heaviest weapons on our innocent people who had taken to the streets to protect their will with flags in their hands and takbir on their lips, they murdered hundreds of citizens and injured thousands. Hence, regardless of its tone, style, narrative, knowledge, or claims on the surface; it is not possible to characterize an organization that has committed such betrayal as a religious structure, just as it is not right to refer to its leader as a religious scholar, a preacher, hocaefendi, etc.

TITLES ATTRIBUTED TO FETO/PDY'S LEADER GO AGAINST ISLAM

- 2. In Islam, no “innocent and indisputable” authority and guide can be accepted other than the Prophet. Nobody and no group can see themselves as the sole representative of religion and call people to show them unconditional obedience and commitment. Since absolute loyalty and commitment is only valid in Islam within the framework of principles set by the Quran and Sunnah, there is no legitimacy according to Islam when someone considers themselves as an infallible authority and guide or when they are viewed as such by those who are affiliated with them. It is clearly against Allah’s book and the Prophet’s Sunnah. Within that framework, it is unacceptable from a religious perspective when it is claimed that a person is special, chosen and infallible or that their statements and teachings have holiness.**

In one word, the concepts “innocence” and “inviolability” refer to “immunity.” Similar to the treatment of their leaders by some religious groups, members of Gulen organization also attribute “immunity” to their leaders, a quality only ascribed to prophets. However, “innocence” or, as referred to in religious doctrines, “virtue” is unique to prophets and signifies their immunity bestowed on by Allah Almighty as they fulfill their mission. It cannot be ascribed to any person or group other than prophets under any circumstance.

After years of training -or indoctrination, to be more accurate-, FETO members regarded all sorts of orders from the leader and supervisors called *abi/abla* as “command of Allah and the Prophet.” Even if it was completely in contrast to religious rules and principles, they carried it out unconditionally, without stating their own ideas or questioning, with the presupposition that “it must include some wisdom that we don’t know about.” As they unquestioningly obeyed their leaders, they ignored the following principles in Islam: “There is no obedience to the created when there is rebellion against the Creator,” In other words, it is about being deemed right by religion and mind [Bukhari, *Ahbâru’l-âhâd*, 1; *Ahkâm*, 4; Muslim, *Imâre*, 40; Abu Dawud, *Cihâd*, 87; Ibn Hisham, *es-Sîre*, VI, 53].

Exploiting certain verses and hadith, distorting the close relationship between the Prophet and the Noble Companions, and various schemes put forward by Gulen have a major part in achieving this absolute obedience within the organization. With years of intense indoctrination disguised as religion, the “culture of unconditional obedience” was imprinted so deep in young minds at secondary education level that the youth had no more intellectual effort for “power of reasoning, skill of criticism, goal of searching the truth”; instead, it was replaced by submission to the leader and to the *abi/abla*. But since every individual is asked to distinguish



between the truth and the wrong using the mind blessed by Allah Almighty, those who show “absolute obedience” to their leader cannot escape responsibility. For according to Allah Almighty, not only those who lead people astray but also those who follow them and go astray will suffer the tribulation of Hell. [See: Al-Araf, 7/38; Al-Ahzab, 33/67]. The Holy Quran forbids blindly following others; it commands us to act consciously and with evidence and prudence.

It seems that Gulen replaced himself for the absolute authority of the Quran and Sunnah in setting religious rules. Because he made his followers believe that every word he uttered using the claim of immunity as a shield was the truth. His followers believe Gulen represents “divine being” and attaining happiness in this world and the next depends on submission to him, therefore they have absolute obedience to his every word. It brings to mind the concept of “innocent imam” (chosen person under Allah’s protection) which is vehemently rejected numerous scholars from different schools of Islam.

As Quran asks the believer to hear advice, follow the best of it, and use their minds [Az-Zumar, 39/18], it forbids them to blindly accept anything or unquestioningly follow anyone. Indeed, Allah Almighty harshly criticizes the Christians and the Jewish by enjoining “They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah, and especially the Messiah, the son of Mary.” [At-Tawbah, 9/31] The Messenger of Allah explains this verse as follows: “They did not actually worship them; but what they had deemed lawful was lawful to them, and what they had deemed unlawful was unlawful to them” [Tirmidhi, Tefsîru’l-Kur’an, Suretu’t-At-Tawbah 10, no: 3095].

A Muslim is not obligated with “absolute obedience” toward anyone including “those in authority” when living their religion and their world. Because obedience also has certain limits and conditions in Islam. In that sense, it is meaningful that the Holy Quran mentions the condition “not disobeying in what is right” [Al-Mumtahanah, 60/12] among the conditions for women for submission to the Prophet.

From this angle, the culture of obedience is instilled in members of Gulen organization since the first day they join (most of them are usually deceived into joining at a young age) to ensure and function the necessary order, they are taught that every act they commit has a divine purpose around the idea of holiness of the ultimate goal, and that the orders they are given cannot be questioned. The hierarchy in the organization is so strict that no member is entitled to object to an order given by their superior; in the event of objection or disobedience, the warning/threat/blackmail mechanism immediately steps in and the individual is cut off from the community if necessary.

In that case, the perception that the group’s leader is innocent, infallible, and chosen, and the absolute obedience and commitment shown by his followers has no relation whatsoever with the general principles of Islam.

FETO/PDY IS CLEARLY A MOVEMENT OF RELIGIOUS EXPLOITATION

3. In Islam, people are called to join the path of Allah and the Prophet. The call to join various individuals, organizations, and factions using the name of Allah is deceiving people using religion and Allah; and it is the greatest injustice done to religion. Nobody can surrender their mind, will, and character to another individual. It is impossible for structures that are founded by exploiting people's religious sentiment in the name of religion and Allah to receive approval from Islam.

Since Prophet Adam, all prophets called people to Allah and to the religion of Allah. As the last prophet, Allah's Messenger also invited people around him to only Islam for 23 years; he never made any attempt for his own interest and future. Indeed, the verse states that the Prophet was "sent as one who invites to Allah, by His permission" [Al-Ahzab, 33/46]. Therefore, sincerity and being voluntary are essential qualities in invitation, calling, and guidance activities [Saba' 34/47; Hud, 11/29, 51; Al-An'am, 6/90]. Nobody should invite anyone to their own cause, prosperity, and interest using Allah and religion.

While that is the case, never in history has there been a period without those who pursued their own interest over religion and exploited religion and the verses of Allah [At-Tawbah, 9/34]. For instance, Balaam bin Baoura was someone like that, who is told in Torah and some Islamic sources to have been punished for plotting against Moses and his tribe despite initially being a good believer. Similarly, there are frequent mentions of "people who grasped the goods of this lower life while inheriting the Book and saying 'We will be forgiven anyway', who exploited religion, and who "openly sold Allah's verses for a small price" [Al-Araf, 7/169; Al-Baqarah, 2/79, 174; Ali 'Imran, 3/187, 199; Al-Ma'idah, 5/44].

The Masjid al-Dirar built by hypocrites in Medina across the Quba Mosque to hurt Muslims is a remarkable example in this matter. With the following verses, Allah Almighty revealed the real purpose behind the masjid and the intentions of those who built it:

"And there are those who put up a mosque for causing harm and disbelief and division among the believers and as a station for whoever had warred against Allah and His Messenger before. And they will surely swear, "We intended only the best." And Allah testifies that indeed they are liars. Never stand for prayer in there!" [At-Tawbah, 9/107-110]. Upon this divine warning, the Prophet immediately had it torn down. [Waqidi, III, 1046; Ibn Hisham, IV 530].



In a story narrated by Muadh ibn Jabal, it is pointed out that the devil will speak as if talking the truth and deceive people under the guise of some people seeming as religious scholars and lead people astray through them [Abu Dawud, Kitabu's-Sünne, 6, no: 4611].

It is understood from above that religious exploitation happens today as it did in the past. The most concrete example of that is the Gulen organization. This organization has left nothing unexploited from faith to worship, from sentiments to dreams, and from hearts to minds. Here are the primary religious values and facts exploited by Gulen organization:

a. Before anything else, Allah's name was exploited. The Holy Quran points out that people may deceive others by Allah over false religious sayings and fabricated statements. "Be not deceived about Allah by the deceiver (satan)" [Luqman, 31/33].

Members of FETO believe their leader speaks directly to Allah the Exalted and therefore hold his words superior to the words of all others. But Allah never spoke directly to any mortal being other than the prophets he chosen. [Ash-Shuraa, 42/51; An-Nisa, 4/164].

In a sermon he delivered on 07.04.1991, Gülen talked about submission and displayed an evident example of exploiting Allah by saying: "I have put my hand over my other hand and said, 'Consider this the hand of my friends, o Allah's Messenger.' Those who hold that hand are holding Allah's hand. This community intends to hold Allah's hand."

b. Gülen organization did not abstain from also exploiting the Quran. In a sermon on 03.06.1990, Gülen supposedly got excited, threw the Quran at the mass of people, and shouted "Protect the Quran! Protect Allah's Messenger!"

In the sermon he delivered on 31.03.1991 titled "Horizon of the Holy", Gülen stated the holy referred to our Prophet and his companions. Then, he talked about a group called "the second holy" and told they were going to come one day. He attributed holiness to his own group by the word "Holy" and stated that they were Allah's witnesses by referring to the following verse: "Those who have disbelieved say, 'You are not a messenger.' Say, 'Sufficient is Allah as Witness between me and you, and whoever has knowledge of the Book (Quran).'" [Ar-Ra'd, 13/43]. He interpreted وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ (whoever has knowledge of the Book) as his own group.

In a sermon on 6 August 1978 titled "Hezbollah" Gülen recited the verse "O you who have believed! Whoever of you should revert from his religion, Allah will bring forth a people soon; He will love them and they will love Him. They are humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers. They strive in the cause of Allah and do not fear the blame of a critic. That is the favor of Allah; He bestows it upon whom He wills..." [Al-Ma'idah, 5/54] and insinuated that the people mentioned in this verse might be his community.

Gülen's exploitation of the Quran sometimes manifests itself with peculiarly willful misinterpretations. For example, he went so far in distortion as to say the spirit that visited Mary was Prophet Muhammad: The 17th verse of the Chapter Maryam translated as "Mary had secluded herself (to be occupied with worship only) from her family and other people. We sent her Our spirit (Our angel), and he represented himself to her as a well-proportioned man." was interpreted by him as: "What was that spirit? The majority of commentary say that it was Gabriel. However, the Quran uses the word "spirit" here, and there is dispute over its attribution. The limits of possibility exceed the frame of dispute. It is as broad as to incorporate the spirit of our Prophet. Yes, that is also possible, because Mary was a very chaste and pure woman. In that respect, there was no other imagination in her eyes and nor should there be. Only someone lawful to her should look at her. And that could only be our Prophet; because he indicated that Mary had been married to him through some connection. From that point, "It is within possibility that the Spirit could be our Prophet."

Since the early periods, mufassirs commented that the "spirit" in the verse referred to Gabriel. Indeed, the 45th verse of Ali 'Imran explains it and states that the visiting angel was Gabriel who gave the good tidings of Jesus. Therefore, coming up with an interpretation of the verse like Gülen did suits neither the integrity of Quran nor the use of spirit concept in Quran. Because it is used in eight different meanings in the Quran and none of them refers to the Prophet. It should also be mentioned that his statements cause a connotation that the Prophet was Mary's husband and hence could be the father of Jesus. Such a notion cannot be associated with the fact that Jesus miraculously came to the world without a father or with the high beings of these distinguished personalities.

c. It is seen that in his sermons and books Gülen exploited the Prophet the most. According to what he openly said in his sermons, the Prophet went to Izmir, walked around the community and inspected them.

In a sermon dated 06.04.1979, he said: "Someone said, 'I saw the Messenger of Allah at night.' He told me, 'I am inspecting right now. I will be on my way to Izmir later.' Another one said, 'He came and sat on the minbar or stood by the mihrab. He appeared among the community."

In a sermon dated 07.04.1991, he said the Prophet was walking amongst them and thousands of people had seen it. After that, he said, "He is among you, I was picturing him wandering among you."

In a sermon dated 09.07.1979, he said our Prophet was inspecting our country from place to place: "We are trying to create the atmosphere to be ready for his inspection. Our Prophet



whose presence is an honor comes to your masjid. He says, 'What news from the future?' Perhaps a hundred times, in the sleeping realm of people with good hearts and pure souls or while some of them were awake, they heard our Prophet the Honor of the Universe say, 'I am going to Izmir to check the atmosphere there. They need me in Anatolia, I am going there.' He is coming to your mosques. He looks at your youth who put their faces on prayer rugs. He checks the joy for love of your elderly. He checks if his community has what it takes."

The most striking example of exploiting the Prophet is portraying him getting on a truck bed in the form of a light beam on the television show called "Şefkat Tepe" aired on FETO's television channel. However, making pictures and miniatures depicting the Prophet and representing him with light beams are not permissible in our religion under any circumstance.

d. Covering the Prophet and companion relationship frequently in his sermons and books and creating interesting pictures, Gulen also exploited the companions:

Gulen has used religion as a means of enchantment and particularly adopted the history of prophets and Siyer-i Nebi as his own story. This format positions Gulen as the Prophet so to speak, and his followers as the "second holy group". One of his biggest distortions in religious narrative is fictionalizing Siyer-i Nebi in a way to exactly match his current situation and that of his followers, and making his followers genuinely believe that fiction.

In a sermon delivered on 03.06.1990, after reciting the hadith "This religion started as something strange and it would again revert to being strange just as it started..." he stated that his group was the second batch of the strange. Then he said one hand of Our Prophet was on the head of his companions and one hand was on his community, and stated that the Prophet called them "his companions".

In a sermon delivered on 04.10.1977 titled "Responsibility", linking the salvation of the Ummah and humankind to his own community, he said: "Allah is with us. Allah's Messenger is with us. Members of the Exalted Assembly envy this community which fights for survival. Like the companions at Badr. This community will either become extinct or change the fate of humanity on the earth. Applauds will come from the heavens, the looks of mournful angels will turn into smiles."

e. An important manifestation of the false religious concept developed by Gulen is his exploitation of various Islamic concepts such as imam, preacher, hocafendi, community, service, and himmet, and even distorting them. Frequently used in the organizational hierarchy, they changed the meaning of these concepts and began to use them in different meanings. So much so that Muslims have become unable to use them today for their negative connotations.

f. The thing that was exploited the most beside all these was the young brains and tender minds. FETO exploited the most intelligent of youth in the country starting from secondary education by stealing their faith, their ideals, their horizons, and their dreams or by misleading them. The pure feelings of those young people were exploited with tears, anecdotes, and exaggerated stories. They abused every hope and yearning with fake humility, soft words, tears, and so-called sermons and advice; they equipped those they transformed from the nation's youth with secret goals, absolute obedience, and devious infiltration skills. These robotized followers at FETO's disposal, who seemed mild-mannered and whose reasoning abilities were taken away from them, deceived our people with Allah, the prophet, and the companions. They used Allah's verses, His Messenger's hadith, the knowledge and wisdom legacy of scholars, and all values of this land particularly Mawlana Rumi and Yunus Emre as tools for their own secret goals and purposes.

g. Bad dua (curse) is another religious matter exploited by Gülen. With the weapon of cursing he directed at those who did not recognize his authority, on one hand Gülen aimed to make his followers scared into obedience for him and on the other he aimed to break the spiritual strength of the recipient. In a curse, Gülen did not abstain from employing the cursing phrases the Prophet use against hypocrites for Muslim groups that he was angry with. Directing the curses that the Prophet and his companions said towards hypocrites in their hardest time against Muslims cannot be associated with religious principles.

h. Another field exploited by Gülen is fatwa. With the benefit of being recognized as absolute religious authority by his followers, Gülen took certain rulings in traditional fiqh culture out of their context and purpose, turning them into a means of threat to ensure the continued organizational commitment of his followers. These include the fatwas about never leaving the organization, going to wherever they are assigned, doing the assignments set by the community, marrying the designated person, making constant financial contributions, making followers swear on their spouse about sending the obtained information to the "abi," "abla" or the so-called "imam" and employing other forms of heavy oaths; and fatwas about punishing acts that are deemed as crime according to organization's rules.

Even the basic religious obligations that are the symbols of Islam and how to perform them were altered. Either they were emptied or distorted to fit the organization's goals. For example, they issued fatwas saying that the five daily prayers -which should be performed in their usual way- could either be performed all at once consecutively at a convenient time or by indicating at heart or they could be compensated later; and that Ramadan fast could be observed at a convenient time outside the month.



In this case, there is no principle or ruling left violated and no value left exploited by this group. This is total “infraction”. Verses of the Quran and especially the anecdotes were interpreted according to the determined goal and the designated mission; a very pragmatist eclecticism devoid of poise and proportion in the field of hadith and siyer; and therefore the will was eliminated since the mistakes were “so to speak” based on the Quran and Sunnah.

Consequently, it is without a doubt that religious concepts and values were used by Gülen as a cover that both concealed the non-religious goals of the organization he personally conducted and managed and also a tool or an apparatus that ensured the absolute obedience of his followers.

FETO/PDY IS A MOVEMENT OF POWER AND INTEREST UNDER THE GUISE OF RELIGION

- 4. It is not compatible in any way whatsoever with the fundamental principles of Islam to turn educational activities disguised as religious into a network of power and interest and create a political and financial organization, and therefore cover all sorts of secret and dirty relations. Moreover, capitalizing on and gaining influence off religion has no religious basis.**

The testimony of numerous people who were with the Gülen organization since the beginning, who received their special training, who adopted their teachings, who undertook their mission, who were at their service and attendance for long years offer striking information about Gülen's personality and his special relationships away from the public. Fictionalized dream sessions and planned mass influence methods caused virtual spiritual pleasure and experience for his followers. Therefore, Gülen's spiritual authority was further reinforced with an experimental illusion in his followers, solidifying the belief in his holy (!) being, faith, and infallibility. The free thinking and rationalizing skills of people in the organization were weakened, even dampened.

The leader of the organization first gained spiritual power through the reputation he attained over religion at the first stage of the movement. Going astray from the path of religion, the organization showed the loyalty and submission –that should be shown to Allah- to their leader speaking under the pretense of religion. On the other hand, giving the impression of an “ascetical, humble life”, the organization gathered countless financial sources from both the rich and the state opportunities after opening the cram schools and especially the schools abroad.

Keeping a so-called distance with politics since his early years, Gülen maintained his political relationships always at a “pragmatist” and “bargaining” style with the aim of ensuring power and interest, therefore following a strategy of gradually “being powerful without being elected”. By hiding his true intentions, he garnered remarkable support from many statesmen and hence gained more strength as the years went by.

The high fees collected under the name of “himmət” (tribute) from businessmen sent to different countries through their schools turned the organization into a movement of interests. He owned large international corporations and banks. In fact, when these banks were at a loss, his followers deposited whatever they had in these banks with their leader's order. Initially a so-called “Service movement,” beginning with the nineties it turned into a “Tribute



movement” that was collected by force, imposition, intrigue, montage, blackmail or psychological pressure. And tribute became a system of extortion. Astronomical fees were collected with scholarship, sacrifice (qurban), and other tributes. The organization made every effort to use its influence acquired in bureaucracy, police, military, judiciary, politics, economy, and academy to be a more effective power group. Seeing their power in media, education, finance, police, and judiciary, merchants and businessmen began to bribe them secretly under the cover of “tribute”. The 10% cut from the salaries of members who worked as public servants and the transfers (also a member’s first ever salary collected as “Hocaefendi’s share”) comprise the organization’s primary financial resources.

The organization further increased its power internationally particularly after Gülen’s move to USA. They began to carry out similar operations not just in Turkey but also in many countries, especially the Turkic republics and African countries. Surely, the systematic support of global powers is apparent in their goal of expanding across the world. The secret cooperation and missions they undertook in the new world caused “hubris syndrome” in the organization’s leaders and members. So much so that their leader practically attempted to alter the power, political parties, the hierarchy in military and police force, and even the balance in media and press.

FETO/PDY IS A FAKE MAHDI MOVEMENT

5. **There were many movements of sedition and malice throughout history that had mahdi/messiah arguments and hurufi/esoteric character that threatened public safety. Secrecy, mystery, commitment, exhibition of charismatic personality, and dissimulation/double personality were the most apparent traits of these movements. In modern times, these types of movements have been used to tear apart and exploit the Islamic community under the yoke of international political engineering.**

One of the most important matters among Gülen's distortions on religious authorities is the issue of mahdi and messiah. Even though he did not openly say it, he both caused that perception in his followers and both overlooked it. He did not deny the dreams about the issue and the rumors spread among his followers; instead, he knowingly contributed to reinforcing that perception. Based on the perception and statements of his followers about him, Gülen was considered the much-awaited mahdi and messiah. Indeed, a FETO member judge had it written in a verdict only days before the coup bid. This belief was used as another tool for commitment to the leader and hallowing him. The mahdi belief was turned into an ideology by this organization that shed blood in our country.

In societies where big breaking points occur in providing religious education through authentic methods and mystical elements are conversely very dominant in the religious understanding and practices, these types of esoteric and mystic claims can very easily have an impact on people. Gülen's desire to have himself perceived as the "absolute authority" in the minds of his followers lies behind so frequently visiting the concepts of mahdship, messiahship, and saintship in the organization. By this way, the allegations of constantly speaking with the Prophet in and outside dreams become more acceptable. Therefore, it becomes much easier to accept that the statements and acts of a person thought to be chosen by Allah reflects the will of Allah.

In the Holy Quran, the primary source of Islam, there is no clear evidence of a savior to be sent in the future. In the verses brought up as evidence to a mahdi appearance [Ar-Ra'd 13/7; Al-Anbya 21/105; As-Saf 61/9] there is no explicit statement about a savior coming in the future. Stories about mahdi are not found among the authentic hadith of Bukhari and Muslim while there are some in certain other hadith sources. Part of these stories, the content of which is highly disputed, are considered authentic or good while the majority are considered weak. Moreover, they are not generally accepted; they are included among ahad stories, i.e. reported by only one narrator. It is clearly expressed by scholars that such news/stories cannot be



considered a basis on matters of faith. In addition, most of the early Sunni Quran scholars did not cover the issue of mahdship; in later eras, it was mentioned with a few sentences while covering the signs of the doomsday but it was stated that this was not a matter of faith [Taftazani, Şerhu'l-Makasid, Ist. 1305, II, 307].

As is known, Allah perfected His religion [Al-Ma'idah, 5/3], and the Prophet bequeathed the Quran and his Sunnah to his Ummah. Therefore, by passing over the obligations given to human beings by the Quran and Sunnah, a Muslim cannot escape the responsibility of eliminating wrongdoing, sedition, and malice by transferring that responsibility to a mahdi, a messiah, or any "inviolable good person." On the contrary, every Muslim is responsible for doing their share on this matter. By their faith, responsibilities, and belief, All Muslims must exert an effort within the bound of their power and ability in order to personally fulfill their duties in the times and places they live in instead of waiting for a mahdi. For Allah the Exalted gives the people only that which they strive for [An-Najm, 53/39]. The Supreme Creator also promises power upon the Earth only to those who believe and do good work for this world and the next [An-Nur 24/55].

Taking it even further, Gülen gave speeches in crowded gatherings that insinuated he was Jesus Christ. For example, he tried to decorate himself with a holy quality by saying that Jesus Christ was going to appear in Izmir; that Izmir possessed the quality of "good land" [Saba, 34/15]; that Jesus Christ had three important qualities and one of them was preaching; that the Messiah would not descend from the sky, instead he would be born with parents; that he would be a good speaker just like himself; and even that Jesus Christ visited Izmir regularly.

In addition to the perceptions of innocence and mahdship, another mysterious thing occasionally seen in the organization is hurufism and jafr (numerical symbolism). Making claims about the mystery of letters and inferring various dates from certain passages in holy texts, the organization made prophecies about future and deceived followers by making them believe. However, ghaib which refers to things that cannot be known or perceived by senses is a field that only Allah Almighty knows [Al-An'am, 6/59; Yunus, 10/20; An-Naml, 27/65]. No human being can bring news about the future other than prophets informed by Allah [Ali 'Imran, 3/179; Al-Jinn, 72/26]. It is against Islam to claim to have found about the inside story of incidents through all sorts of superstitious means such as fortune-telling, prophecy, etc. or bluntly claim what will happen in the future. It is against faith to lend an ear and approve of those who claim to know about secret sciences and bring news from the ghaib. Jifr, which is claimed to offer information about the future based on an unfounded belief that letters and numbers have special secrets, is also a baseless and superstitious method.

In that context, Gülen's interpretation of the first verse in Chapter al-Nasr (idhā jāa naṣrul-lahi wal-fathu) is quite striking: "As per syntax rules, the determinative is ruled out in direction. And it signifies a specific thing. Therefore, 'wal-fathu' here means fath Allah (Allah's conquest). It refers to Allah's creating us, urging us to the path of service, directing people's heart toward us... It all happens with Allah's help and grace. Many people see that this is the case, and mentions it at every chance as a necessity of the philosophy of oneness." [M. Fethullah Gülen, Fasıldan Fasıla-2, Nil Yayınları, İzmir 1995, p. 184]

It seems that Gülen did not rectify the impressions of him being the mahdi and/or messiah reinforced by a number of indications and signs as well as the perceptions and narrations of followers around him. On the contrary, he chose the way of benefitting from such wrong impressions. He further increased his influence on his followers by supporting these concepts with calculations of hurufism and jafr. Presenting one's self as the mahdi and messiah by exploiting people's perceptions and sentiments or keeping silent at such an impression is nothing but a clear fraud the cases of which we have seen for centuries.



FETO/PDY HAS SHADY SOURCES OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

- 6. In the so-called religious discourse of this organization, dreams and mysterious stories were more in demand than Islam's basic sources of knowledge. Through those dreams and stories, innocent masses were deceived and charmed, leading to the birth of a diseased mentality. To that end, they resorted to distorting religion through conversations, sermons, and preaches especially using media. It was even claimed the Prophet himself attended these sermons and conversations, and orders and instructions given to the followers were predicated on the Prophet through dreams. It is impossible to religiously legitimize such an organization that adopts it as a method to fortify its authority by deceiving people in such way.**

The primary source of our religion is Allah's book and the Sunnah of the Prophet who communicated this book to people. Other than that, the perception that Allah has special contact with some people, and the inspirations and dreams of these special people serve as a source for rulings is, before anything, against Allah Almighty's declaration that He has perfected the religion [Al-Ma'idah, 5/3]. As a matter of fact, when asked whether the Ahl al-Bayt had special information that Allah's Messenger did not reveal to others, Ali responded: "No! We have no special knowledge other than the ability to understand the Quran given by Allah" [Abu Dawud, Diyāt, 11; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, I, 79]. The revelation ended with the Prophet's passing, and the age of *ijtihad* began. The rulings put forward by *mujtahids* and *fiqh* scholars through comparison and other methods of deduction could be just as erroneous as accurate. The rulings of Quran scholars put forward through methods of reasoning and deduction are of the same kind.

Rulings produced through methods and ways apart from the above such as dream, inspiration, discovery, oracle, and *istikharah* are not final and nor are they binding. Therefore, if information obtained through such ways contradicts the definitive rulings of religion, it is against Islam to abide by them. From that perspective, it is clearly stated by prominent figures of the Sufi path that those who follow the false opinions of a person they think to have come up with a discovery will be sinners in religion. [Imam Rabbānī, *Mektûbât*, c. I, 31. *Mektup*]. Those who act on such notions are unaware that they are actually creating another religion within religion. Anticipating such a danger in advance, Islamic scholars clearly stated that inspiration cannot be a source in religion. Molla Gürani emphasized that regarding the statements of people who claim to have received inspiration as a source in religion is a new thing and meant attempting to create a new religion after the Prophet; he said it is every Muslim's duty to stand against such concepts [Molla Gürānī, ed-Dürerü'l-levāmî, Beirut 2007, p. 565].

Since nobody except the prophets has the qualities of immunity/infallibility (innocence, inviolability, and being protected), the validity of their views and interpretations must be compatible with the Holy Quran and Sunnah. This harmony in the Islamic tradition has been supervised by the fields of Quran and Fiqh Methods. Accordingly, religious authority rests with Allah in the absolute sense; the Prophet communicates the revelation he receives from Allah to people. After the passing of Allah's Messenger, there was no more a source of absolute authority or precise information. Even if it is a scholar, a guide, or a mujtahid, nobody is faultless. Their job is understanding and interpreting Islam's two sources. It is also unanimously accepted that interpretations have no claims of absolute truth. People who influence other people's lives are only deemed within bounds of legitimacy to the extent of their compliance with scholarly fields. Those who are seen as a saint, a mahdi, a messiah or a hoca and try to establish authority over people through oracles, dreams, inspirations, and similar ways without abiding by the limits of scholarly fields cannot make rulings in the name of Islam. The fundamental truth epitomized by scholars of Islam is that religious rules (Sharia rulings) can only be received from scholars; no religious ruling can be determined through inspirations, dreams, discoveries or similar methods.

Another frequently employed method by the organization to guide its members and people around them is the dreams that are seen or claim to be seen. Usually, in those dreams the Prophet appears so to speak and gives a physical instruction. The dream formula is often employed to get people to donate their land, build schools, send tweets or cast their vote.

Even though Gülen knew that dreams were not proof in religion and said that no deed could be based on them, he used both his and his followers' dreams as document, guiding people any way he wanted with them. His attitude in time evolved into directing his followers and sending messages over dreams.

It is indeed confirmed by Gülen's statement that follows: "There are messages full of inspiration and guidance in true and loyal dreams. That is why many great discoveries were accomplished thanks to dreams and many played a part in determining the fate of individuals and nations." "...it can always be accepted that dreams have a guiding function in allowable matters, so long as it is exclusive to the one who sees it." Although he goes on the record afterwards saying that Quran and Sunnah limits must be the basis for that, it is hard to say he followed this rule in practice.

As dreams against the Quran and Sunnah are of no value whatsoever, those are not against the Quran and Sunnah also have no binding value. In fact, it bears no value even when it is claimed that one has seen the Prophet in a dream and the Prophet gave certain messages. Moreover, most dreams are subjective images appearing in our spiritual and mental world



during sleep as a result of various external factors. Also, claiming to have had a dream that one has not had is described as “The worst of lies” by the Prophet [Bukhari, Tabir, 45; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, II, 96, 119].

Discovery and oracle, used by the organization to influence their followers, has also no binding power in religion.

Gülen has created an uncontrolled “theology” that makes his words and acts elude the supervision of authentic religious knowledge. He sought justification in his own way and found it in the Islamic fields of tafsir, hadith, siyer, and fiqh; and he found it. When it became impossible, he fostered the belief that there was “wisdom” and a “divine consent” in what he did particularly through images of Hizr and Messiah and dreams even though it is against the Quran and Sunnah. This cult forming over Gülen’s personality brought a collective arrogance to “the movement exemplified by itself” as described by himself. The person who they were representing Allah’s will on the earth and the “project of the future”, guided by a chosen leader who has divine calling in whatever he does, was able to consider everything lawful, even a coup d’état.

In conclusion, things like discovery, oracle, or dream are not religiously binding for the individual and society and no ruling can be founded upon them. [See. An-Nasafi, Tebsiratü’l-edille, I, 22-24; Taftazani, Şerhu’l-akâid, s. 72-74; Ibn Khaldun, Şifâü’s-sâil, s. 61-69; Yazır, Hak Dini, VI, 4259-4260; Talat Sakallı, Rûya ve Hadis Rivayeti, Isparta, 1994].

FETO/PDY IS A MOVEMENT OF DIVISION TEARING APART UMMAH'S UNITY

- 7. Different denominations, dispositions, and schools of thought came together in harmony and created tremendous richness in the Islamic community. And because the unity of Muslims is essential, all sorts of division and factionalism that may ruin the unity were forbidden in Islam. An organization that monopolizes the truth and ostracizes everyone else (FETO/PDY) does not accord with the Islamic tradition. Therefore, no organization, idea or movement that aims to tear apart Islam's Ummah can be considered innocent.**

Showing great tolerance toward non-Muslims and engaging close relations with them in Interfaith Dialogue efforts, FETO assumed a stance against Muslims -who were not a part of the organization- that was as cold, dismissive, and marginalizing as possible. Contrary to the description in the 29th verse of Chapter Al-Fath, their attitude could be summarized as "violent against believers, merciful against disbelievers." They spared from Muslim groups the dialogue they had with non-Muslims, always keeping a distance toward the former. In fact, they looked down on Islamic groups, in a way that goes against fellowship in Islam, and sometimes tried to suppress and silence them with plots and tricks. However, in numerous verses Allah Almighty forbids befriending and working under non-Muslims instead of Muslims, or more bluntly, enemies of Allah and Muslims [Ali 'Imran, 3/28; An-Nisa, 4/139, 144; Al-Ma'idah, 5/51; Al-Mumtahanah, 60/1].

The crooked mentality of the organization wiped away the sentiment of unity and belonging in the pupils they trained. Sent to FETO schools by their families for religious education, the youth have lost their sense and awareness of belonging first to their families, then to their country and society, and finally to the Ummah of Islam. Taken away from their most important belonging, these young individuals have turned into servants programmed by indoctrination to solely carry out the orders of FETO's leader. Their family, homeland or Islam's Ummah has no significance or priority for them anymore. In that sense, they bring to mind the suicide squads of the Hashashin groups in history. This outcome is another example of how FETO destroyed generations and it completely matches the quality of evil forces described as "... Spreads mischief and destroys generations" in the 205th verse of Al-Baqarah. As a matter of fact, in a conversation years ago, Gülen could give the green light to suicide saying, "If such a sacrifice needs to be done from time to time for the survival of service, we will smash ourselves into the fire and vanish!"



In a sermon dated 9 September 1977, Gülen said: “A believer who has faith in Allah and His Messenger knows how to overcome whoever stands before him even if it is their father, their brother, their uncle, or their relative!” After that, he misused the verse Al-Mujadila 58/22, which is actually about the attitude to be assumed against disbelieving parents who fight against the call of Islam, and said: “Do not listen even to your father, your mother, or your brother for the sake of this cause!”

Neither unity, nor the Ummah or the nation has any value for this organization which –as it has become more clear now- is guided by a “superior mind” against Islam and Muslims and which only focuses on targets set for them. It was seen with a bitter experience on the night of July 15 that they could kill hundreds, even thousands of Muslims to reach those goals. Having no qualms about pulling a weapon on fellow Muslims, on fellow citizens, and waging war on their own people as the pawn of dark forces whatever their goals and claims are, they have clearly shown with this move that they are a body driven by mischief and division and tearing apart the oneness.

However, Islam, the religion of oneness, commands the unity of Muslims regardless of their denomination or disposition. Differences of opinion in belief, jurisprudence, and philosophy –as long as they are within bounds of oneness principle- demonstrates the intellectual and scholarly richness in the Islamic community. Because the Islamic community is one and a whole with all schools of thought. And for that reason, such differences have been considered “a cause of grace for the Ummah” instead of division in the Islamic tradition.

Islam strictly rejects any division, faction, grouping, and separation that aims dividing and tearing apart the social structure. No idea or movement predicated upon tearing apart Islam’s Ummah religiously, possessing the arrogance and narcissism of the community, and belittle other Muslim groups can be considered innocent. A structure that monopolizes the truth and ostracizes everyone else cannot have an Islamic foundation.

FETO/PDY IS A MOVEMENT OF SECRECY WITH NO MORALITY

- 8. It is for certain that the structures and organizations operating in the field of religion which cannot be inspected and which especially have no transparent financial sources will incorporate all sorts of dubious activities and shady relations. At this point, there is no sound and accurate basis to the politics and strategy of a movement that tries to obtain legitimacy through fabricating religious arguments in their own way. Therefore, this organization exploited people's religious sentiments to use them for its own goals.**

Spreading Islam is public and open. It is not right to adopt secrecy as a method of spreading Islam. Regarding the secrecy adopted in the early days of the Prophet's Makkah period as a justification for illegal acts and therefore dissimulation carried out in modern Muslim societies and developing a spreading strategy on it is wrong.

In Islam, being honest and reliable is the most fundamental condition for spreading faith. However, FETO built its strategy around lies and deception. It can only be considered deceiving its own community with the prophet when a group that abuses the Prophet for its own servile goals and exploits religious sentiment of people claims to be acting with the prophet's method. Based upon claims that he was given special and confidential religious information, Gülen made up a cover for the secret affairs in the organization's operations, even going as far as to say "the Prophet founded the biggest movement of discretion." However, the Prophet never concealed any religious information from a portion of Muslims, including the Makkah period.

Secrecy is one of the principles that has the most significance for FETO. Featuring a secret organization structure on the horizontal and vertical planes, the movement both places emphasis on secrecy in terms of organizational structure and also enables its members to seem different than who they really are by hiding their identity with code names. Called "caution" within the organization, this principle along was adopted as the most primary strategy with the goal of "we should be everywhere" and infiltrating into sensitive areas, particularly state institutions.

The organization is particularly very similar to the esoteric organization led by Hassan-i Sabbah (d. 518 AH/1124 CE) which is of Ismaili origin and called "Hashashin". Historical sources state that Sabbah gave hash to people working at his disposal and made them addicted to it, had them do anything he wanted with the promise of paradise, and used them to wipe away his political competition. Called "Fida'yin", these people materialized their horrible acts due to their absolute belief in "appearance of the mahdi". They considered their deeds, including



all the assassinations, a holy mission. One by one, they wiped out the politicians and scholars they deemed as a threat to their great cause. Their leader, Hassan-i Sabbah, was not an adventurer contrary to popular belief; he was a person cautious in seeming to abide by Islamic rules. So much so that he is rumored to have his son killed for consuming alcohol. With his disciplinarian approach, religious knowledge, and personal charisma, he had the skills to make large masses follow him. He paralyzed the Seljuk government for a while with his group of fida'yin, scared government officials into doing what he wanted them to do, and eliminated those who opposed through various methods. [See: Abdülkerim Özeydin, "Hasan Sabbâh", DİA, XVI, 347-350; Mustafa Öz, "Haşîşiyye", DİA, XVI, 418-419]

There are similar organizations in other religions and beliefs outside the world of Islam. And Opus Dei is one of the best examples. Translated as "Work of God", Opus Dei is a Catholic organization also recognized by the Vatican. It was founded in Spain by priest J. Escriva in the late 1920s. Appearing as an anti-communism organ in its early years due to its right-wing identity, Opus Dei later turned into a massive terrorist organization later the size of which cannot be conjectured. Having the religious goal of serving the Vatican, Escriva provided very good educational opportunities for the poor and smart children and later infiltrated into state and government bodies through them. "Operating by using government facilities and buildings" became an indispensable strategy for Opus Dei. It is reported that the movement adopts the philosophy "The ends justify the means" and therefore resorts to illegal activities. This is why they are often referred to as the "white glove mafia". Opus Dei has up to 15 universities as well as hundreds of primary and secondary schools in various countries. Escriva convinced people around him that he was "Padre" or "Father" with its obvious meaning in Christianity, and said he had received a sign from God to found this community. Opus Dei's strict hierarchy inspired by Freemasonry and its secrecy are also striking in terms of similarity to the organization in question.

We can say that the organizational structure of Gulen organization has a "dual" character parallel to the narrative and philosophy of its leader and organization. This dual structure can be described as transparent and secret networks. The transparent networks include legal bodies such as educational activities, non-governmental and professional organizations, local and international business establishments, press and media organs. The dominance of a strict hierarchy is apparent in secret networks. Since they have been set up to "infiltrate into the state", secrecy is an indispensable principle. Civil bureaucracy, judiciary, security forces, and military are different networks incorporated by this secret group. As brainwashing techniques are administered in these networks, Gülen's identity as the Mahdi/Messiah beyond being an opinion leader stands out along with the esoteric setup around this notion. In that sense, the organization assumes a systematic form where different wheels spin one another.

There is intensive dissimulation in secret networks, where certain theology professors help ease any likely “pangs of conscience”, people are guided into “greater goals” in this way, and motivation is kept at the highest level. On the other hand, contrary to this situation, open association with the “Service Movement” is turned into a factor of prestige in the transparent networks. In fact, it causes a spiritual pressure on people who are yet to establish contact with Gülen, leading to the thought that they should also meet these “excellent” people “like everyone else” and cooperate with them. It is seen that right at this point a “network of sympathizers” appears by itself beside the “networks of affiliation.” There is an attempt to make the maximum use of individuals, institutions, and companies in this network for the organization. Prestigious events like Abant Meetings and Turkish Olympics are major activities that feed and grow the network of sympathizers.

It is obvious that advanced technologies of data collection, processing, and correspondence are employed in governing the entire organization. The movement has many professionals for this job. It further raises the chance of success in the organization’s mafiatic affairs and acts.



FETO/PDY IS AN UNETHICAL MOVEMENT

- 9. Methods like hiding one's true self, acting different than what they really are, being a hypocrite, speaking differently in different places, disregarding what is lawful/unlawful in Islam for dissimulation, using code names, living a different life than what they believe, lying, curiosity, violating privacy, blackmailing, favoritism, organized solidarity for evil purposes are un-Islamic and unethical.**

One of the primary tactics employed by FETO in carrying out illegal activities is to practice dissimulation in the name of caution until a goal is accomplished. Dissimulation means one's stating their belief different than what it really is or doing or saying things they do not believe at heart. It is something that is rejected by scholars of Sunni Islam.

The so-called Sunni organization resorted to all sorts of ways such as lies, slander, deception, stealing exam questions etc. by practicing dissimulation. Constantly hiding their true intentions, the members considered many things lawful to accomplish their goals and embraced an understanding that is completely against the religion of Islam. However, one of the most important moral qualities in a Muslim is being trustworthy. As a matter of fact, in addition to other meanings including "one who believes and acknowledges," the word "mu'min" (believer) also means "one who inspires trust." The most beautiful example in that regard is the Lord of the Universe who was called "Muhammad al-Amin" (Muhammad the Trustworthy) in his community and about whose reliability even his fiercest rivals had no doubt.

Acting carefully not to be in conflict with anyone other than Muslims, the organization did not show the same kind of sensitivity toward Muslims. Practically waging a holy war against individuals and institutions that it considers an enemy, the organization saw no harm in utilizing unethical instruments by distorting the hadith "War is deceit." [Bukhari, Jihad, 157; Muslim, Fiten, 75-78] While it is forbidden for a Muslim to deceive another one in Islam under normal circumstances, [Ahmad ibn Hanbal, IX. 122-123] it was only deemed permissible to provide false information in need of various tactics and strategies against the enemy in wartime. [Nawawi, Muslim Şerhi, XII. 45]. However, it should be underlined that the license in question is only lawful during wartime and against the enemy. Otherwise, it is not permissible for Muslims to deceive one another and the society in which they live by legitimate measures.

FETO/PDY ENCROACHED MUSLIMS' AND PUBLIC'S RIGHTS FOR ITS OWN INTENTIONS

- 10. Committing all sorts of corruption and illegal acts, particularly stealing exam questions, to recruit their own followers into state staff and take over the state means infringement of public rights and rightful due. A structure that adopts such a method as the basic tool for its organization cannot be considered Islamic. Whoever leads, guides or overlooks such acts have no conscience, morality, and piety.**

The most fundamental element missing in those who violated the clear bans of religion under the name of service and cause to realize the goals of their leader and who did it in the name of religion is that they lack a healthy understanding of religion. Having initially emerged to serve the religion, the movement has led to the creation of a perception of religion at this point in which its fundamental rules are loosened because of the arbitrary attitude they have adopted. Accepting something unlawful to be lawful means acting like a non-believer and doing an unlawful deed makes one a sinner [Taftazani, Şerhu'l-Akâid, İstanbul 1308, 190]. They are all the outcome of deviation from the true type of religious understanding. Those who see no harm in committing open sins by the word of a person whom they think to have special contact with Allah also shows in a sense the extent of dissimulation adopted by the organization. It is beyond comprehension that a person who said on a public broadcast that using illegal electricity and water is not lawful and those who do it must ask for the blessing of all 60 million people also gave the approval for using unlawful and unethical ways to take over state institutions as well as stealing exam questions which also meant stealing the future of not only our people now but also our upcoming generations.

Members of the organization used weapons of “slander” and “conspiracy” against those who did not demonstrate absolute submission or were considered bad for interest, whether they had been trained in the organization or not. And they considered these immoral acts lawful for the necessity and continuance of their so-called services. Furthermore, they obtained information and videos from people’s private lives, processed them through various trickery and montages, and used them as a tool for blackmail. They caused many cases of unjust suffering with illegal acts such as relieving innocent people of duty, jailing them, etc. They caused many people who wanted to stop them or people who were not members (or had been members but quit/dismissed) to lose their jobs/careers, their reputation, their freedom, and even their lives. These immoral acts have nothing to do with Islam whatsoever. Defaming innocent people with slander and making it a rising step for personal goals is one of the big-



gest immoral deeds expressly forbidden in the Quran by Allah Almighty [An-Nur 24/15-19; An-Nisa 4/112; Al-Ahzab, 33/ 58].

Islam has made it unlawful to violate the privacy of others' lives; a series of heavy sanctions have been prescribed for the afterlife when such violation is committed. In that sense, family life, residential privacy, and private conversations are included in the concept of private life. The believers are told in the Quran "Not to spy or backbite one another" [Al-Hujurat, 49/12]. Scholars state that the concept "spying" in the verse may include all sorts of personal and private information including defects [Maturidi, Tevilât, IX, 336].

The Prophet also stated spying has no place in Islam and it will not go unpunished with the hadith: "O you who believe with their tongue, while faith has not reached their heart! Do not harm the Muslims, nor spy on them to expose their secrets! For indeed whoever tries to expose his Muslim brother's secrets, Allah exposes his secrets wide open, even if he were in the depth of his house" [Tirmidhi, Birr, 85] [Bukhari, Rüya, 45; Tirmidhi, Libas, 19].

From the very beginning, members of the organization have assumed a very devious and secret attitude to be cautious and wary. They neither seemed as they were nor became what they seemed. They acted with a different character especially in the strategic ranks of bureaucracy and managed to conceal themselves for long years. In that context, the behaviors that revealed their true intention and purpose were considered betrayal, defeat, and failure.

The volume of hypocrisy and speaking differently is so vast in the forty-year span of Gülen's statements and acts that a separate book was published on the issue titled "Çelişkiler İnsanı" (A Man of Paradoxes) which put forward hundreds of Gülen's contrasting statements on almost every matter.

For instance, while they said "we have nothing to do with Sufism" in Turkey, upon noticing the prestige of Sufism and Mawlana Rumi in the USA when they expanded over there, they published an English version of the book "Kalbin Zümrüt Tepeleri" under the title "Sufism in Islam), and they founded the Rumi Forum.

While Gülen frequently employed and exploited the Prophet motif in Turkey and other Muslim communities, he had the audacity to remove the Prophet part from Kalima Tawheed for dialogue efforts.

Gülen attributed a label of "corruption" to Risale-i Nur movement and brought Abu Dhar to the forefront at the very beginning to ascribe an "authentic and puritan" idealism to himself. But when the organization was growing, he adopted the method of justifying all "recruitment" tactics over other companions.

This contradiction is yet another example of the hypocrisy demonstrated by the Gülen organization in many areas. While the emphasis on modernism, post-Islamism, and dialogue appealed to the Western public and domestic secular/modern segments, the conventional religious attitude was for satisfying the pious supporters and the spiritual sentiments of the larger Muslim public. In fact, each one of the articles on the organization's media organs that are based on different styles and dispositions, in which we can see the contrast in question, are compiled and written by people from the same community. Sometimes, content of a speech given in the USA by a member can be completely in contrast to another speech given by the same member in Turkey. While giving the image of taking our nation's general understanding of Islam and interpretations as basis with the books and periodicals published in Turkey for the organization, they acted differently and had a dissimilar approach especially in overseas activities. It is obvious that the only motivation behind this ambivalent behavior is pragmatism.

It has provided an unprecedented opportunity for Western strategists who created a global-scale wave of Islamophobia by clearing the way for particularly neo-salafi groups and therefore hindered Muslims' development, organization, and political activities. Global forces that presented this organization to the world as an effective alternative to the terror groups which are usually controlled by them, that helped it expand, organize, open schools, and become corporate aim to place a so-called "Islamic" body -which does not harm them and even benefits them- on the backbone and hence take Islam's core under control. From that standpoint, there is no doubt that Gülen organization evolved into an external global project long ago, which has no relation with "Islamization" and which only desires to "alter Islam and control Muslims."

label of "moderate Islam" that they harped on for decades in the past were merely a mask that veiled their dark intentions. Regarding these corners of malice, Allah Almighty enjoined: "And when it is said to them, 'Do not cause corruption on the earth,' they say, 'We are but reformers.' Unquestionably, it is they who are the corrupters. But they are not aware" [Al-Baqarah 2/11-12].



FETO/PDY EXPLOITED ZAKAT, CHARITY, AND ALMS OF THE POOR AND TURNED THEM INTO EXTORTION UNDER TRIBUTE

11. Religious obligations to Allah cannot be abused for entirely different purposes. Founding television channels, carrying out media operations, doing lobby work with money from zakat and qurban and using the money to fund election campaigns in other countries can never be deemed justifiable.

A “jurisprudence” emerged naturally for dissimulation that the organization used frequently everywhere. In that context, it is known by everyone that the organization earned financial income under the name of zakat and “tribute” for a long time, collected from both members and sympathizers sometimes by their own will and sometimes through various methods including financial audit pressure, blackmail, etc. Collecting zakat with threats and pressure –although indirectly- aside, spending it at unworthy places is one of the biggest complaints about the issue. Instead of areas designated by the Quran, the collected zakat money was unlawfully spent in line with the organization’s goals on television programs, lobbying operations and election campaigns in other countries, representation/entertainment activities, and social and cultural events; it was used to have books and articles written favoring Gulen and his organization, to pay for the mansion where Gülen resided, to pay the salaries of so-called imams in the organization, etc. However, for zakat to be valid, it needs to be spent for the classes mentioned in the 60th verse of At-Tawbah and it is not appropriate to spend it anywhere else [Ibn Abidin, Radd al Muhtar, Riyadh 2003, III, 291 et al.].

The money collected for sacrifice worship was used for other purposes, the charity collected for the poor and the orphan was also spent on organizational aims, most of the student grants never reached their destination. As a typical example of distorting religion, according to a practice first seen in this organization, a fundraising was held to raise money in order to sacrifice an animal in honor of the Prophet, thereby providing financial support for the organization. However, there is no type of worship as “sacrificing an animal in honor of the Prophet” in fiqh tradition. Regarding a practice that was not introduced by Allah and His Messenger as a form of worship is innovation, even heresy [Muslim, Cuma 44; Abu Dawud, Sunnet 6; Tirmidhi, Mukaddime 16]. Ali had sacrificed an animal in the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) name as per his will which cannot be proof for this practice [Abu Dawud, Dahâyâ, 2; Müsned, I, 107, 149].

In that context, the organization issued a fatwa telling its members working at critical posts that they could consume alcohol, they could partake in entertainment that is deemed unlawful by religion, they could dance with foreign (unrelated) people, and they could disregard Islamic rules on tasattur. Similarly, allowing female members and wives of male members

who hold critical offices to not cover their head is something against the consensus in the Ummah and it is not recognized by any of the mujtahid imams.

In conclusion, FETO manifests itself as an eclectic, pragmatic, unlawful group in the field of tafsir, hadith, fiqh, siyer, and Islamic history or in all scholarly fields of Islam. Everything that serves the organization's interest was used readily and skillfully so to say. In brief, there have been and will always be people who try to "instrumentalize" the principles, values, and rulings of religion to obtain "legitimacy" for their own position. Gülen movement is an example of that, but they are not the only one. Necessary steps must be taken against any group that makes similar statements and acts in the same way and exploits religion for their servile goals.



FETO/PDY IS A MOVEMENT THAT DOES RELIGIOUS ENGINEERING FOR INTERFAITH DIALOGUE AND TEARS APART THE KALIMAH TAWHEED

12. FETO/PDY initiated dubious attempts propagating “interfaith dialogue” and “moderate Islam” to draw interest and support from the Western public and raise sensitivity against the thesis of clash of civilizations, and did not hesitate to be a part of dark projects created against Muslims in the world by participating in many secret and mysterious relationships. There is no doubt that Islam is the true religion in the ranks of Allah. It is essential to live in peace with followers of other religions without damaging freedoms and it is possible to help and show solidarity with them on a common platform in every affair that works in favor of humanity. Therefore, the attempt to create a common religious theology or religious union of culture under “interfaith dialogue,” which is understood to be a product of political engineering, is unacceptable in any shape or form. Compromising the fundamental principles of Islam, e.g. disregarding the prophethood of Muhammad (s.a.w.) which comprises the second part of kalimah tawheed, is completely unacceptable.

“Interfaith Dialogue” efforts were one of the most interesting activities carried out by Gulen organization in the nineties. Although it was presented as “talking and discussing about common problems in tolerance and understanding without imposing anything and preserving the differences, and seeking ways of cooperation”, it was understood over time that this served the secret goal of establishing a close relationship with the Church and the West and gaining their support. As a matter of fact, the following clear statements on the letter Gülen personally presented to the Pope on 9 February 1998 are sufficient proof: “We are here to become a part of the ongoing mission of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) initiated by His Highness Pope Paul VI. It is our desire to see the realization of this mission. We have come here to offer our most humble assistance, in the most modest of ways and even with a little daring, in your fulfillment of this precious service.”

In reality, Gülen held numerous national and international events with the Interfaith Project that was based on the resolutions taken at the 2nd Vatican Council; in doing that, he brought his followers closer to Christian culture while also helped his organization become accredited by the Western world. Thus, Gülen had the chance to build himself a base in Pennsylvania. Many Western countries opened their doors to the organization and as a result they were introduced to a lot of opportunities all around the world.

After years of dialogue efforts, Fetullah Gülen's following statements on the Crusades are a clear indicator how far away the process had taken Gülen:

"The invasion of your country by the Crusaders is not a very dangerous thing. Because there are red lines between you and them. For one, they do not set eyes on your women and daughters. They do not touch your temples. The Crusaders did not."

In order to attribute legitimacy to the dialogue process, 64th verse of Ali 'Imran was exploited, and the first part of kalimah tawheed was taken out on purpose. Indeed, in some of his speeches Gülen said "I will hold dear anyone who says 'La ilaha illallah'" which caused a perception among his followers that salvation could be attained even without uttering the "Muhammadan Rasulallah" in Kalimah Tawheed. A nonsense spread that reciting the first part of Kalimah Tawheed (La ilaha illallah) was enough to be a Muslim and those who did not believe in Prophet Muhammad could also get into heaven. As a matter of fact, an article penned by a FETO member included the following: "But his goal was to first embrace all human beings with grace and compassion, and bring everyone who uttered La ilaha illallah here from among his Ummah even those who did not recognize him by avoiding the latter part of kalimah tawheed. Because he would say, 'Whoever says La ilaha illallah gets into heaven.'"

It is well known by everyone that the essence and basis of Islam is faith in Allah. The declaration of this principle and the first condition of being a Muslim is to utter the sentence of evidence which means "I bear witness that no deity except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad (s.a.w.) is His Servant and Messenger" [Muslim "Iman" 1]. The "La ilaha illallah" part of Kalimah Shahadah refers to tawheed, "Muhammadan Rasulallah" refers to the prophethood of the Prophet and the entirety of divine principles that he brought to us from Allah Almighty. These two parts are much like Islam and faith; one incorporates the other. Moreover, the phrase "Muhammadan Rasulallah" goes together with "La ilaha illallah" in many stories including the "Gabriel Hadith" [Bukhari, Iman 37] [Bukhari, Zekât 1; Muslim, Iman, 116].

In that case, it does not suit the nature of Islam's theology and calling to disregard matters like faith in the prophet with a pragmatic approach just because the situation necessitates it.



FETO/PDY STALLED GENERATIONS IN EURASIA WITH AN EMPTY CONCEPT OF ISLAM

- 13. FETO/PDY pioneered an empty argument of Islam through schools they opened in particularly our country, many parts of the world, and especially in Asia and Africa. They wasted the energy and hopes of Muslims living in these regions.**

Following the collapse of the USSR in the nineties, FETO/PDY opened schools and carried out activities in these countries with the support of our country's statesmen in our country and the public. Their claim was to fill the emerging educational gap in Central Asian countries after communism and introduce them to the Muslim identity of Anatolia. Under the guise of accomplishing these so-called goals, FETO/PDY used Islam as a cover to realize its secret agenda with the aim of getting the social and state support in our country. In reality, through these institutions they tried to materialize the political intentions of global powers, increase both the human and financial resources of the organization, and have a voice in the administration of these countries.

FETO/PDY collected a high amount of financial aid under zakat, charity, sacrifice, etc. using the religious sentiment of our country's charitable people under the cover of bringing help and providing Islamic education to the victimized people of Africa who had been through heavy colonization in religious, cultural, and economic terms. While they went to African countries with these so-called goals, they either never told people about Islam there or conveyed an empty teaching of Islam which they formed within the organization in line with their secret goals.

In conclusion, by not bringing an authentic religious understanding and education to people in the aforementioned regions, FETO/PDY not only let down people of those countries and people who supported the organization in good faith, but they also frustrated their hopes and expectations of Islam that would keep their spirituality alive, and wasted their energy.

THE DAMAGE FETO/PDY CAUSED IN COUNTRIES IT OPERATED IN MUST BE ASSESSED

- 14. The distortion and destruction FETO/PDY caused in our spiritual geography, Central Asia, Balkans, Africa, and the Far East under the cover of being education volunteers will be evaluated as well as the hegemony they established in these countries using religion and religious values. The findings will be shared with the Religious Affairs Ministers and Religious Affairs Presidents of the countries that will attend the Eurasian Islamic Council which will convene in November.**

It is known by everyone that FETO actively operated in European countries like Albania in the Balkans, in African countries like Morocco, Algeria, etc., and especially in various Asian countries such as Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, etc. after the collapse of the USSR. For that reason, the activity and adverse effects of the organization in this region will be covered in the Eurasian Council which will be held in a few months.

It is planned that the meeting will cover issues such as how and when FETO spread to these regions, how they recruited young people, the language and religious discourse they employed, their schools and other educational activities, visual and printed religious publications, civil and state institutions where they are organized, their illegal activities, the state's and people's view of the organization, their impact on perception of religion in the regions, the damage they caused on relations between countries, and the publications and evaluations after July 15 coup attempt.



JOINT COMMISSIONS WILL BE FOUNDED TO FIGURE THE DAMAGE INFLICTED BY FETO/PDY ON OUR RELIGIOUS LIFE

- 15. It is a matter of urgency that the Diyanet and Theology community conduct scholarly studies that examine the religious exploitation activities of FETO and similar organizations. In that context, so-called scientific works and publications that glorify the organization and its leader must be inspected by related bodies, evaluated in scientific terms, and necessary steps must be taken.**

- 16. A special commission must be established under the High Board of Religious Affairs that involves academicians from different departments in faculties of theology. The commission shall examine and find out the damage inflicted by FETO/PDY terrorist organization on Islam and Muslims, the distortion and destruction it caused on Islam's principles, viewpoint of religious obligation, and code of ethics, and the contortion it caused on Islam's fundamental concepts, and these findings will be shared with the public.**

Two different events will be held in the short and long term to that end. Firstly, a commission will be set up that is comprised of scholars from different departments of Theology Faculties. An emergency action plan and a road map will be created at workshops to be held with members of the commission. At first, they will analyze the printed and visual publications of the organization and write observations and comments on the issue. Also, the various publications that have promoted and lauded the organization will be evaluated separately by the commission. The members will also do their share on the matter of information pollution in media and in the cyber world. The studies carried out by the members will be shared with the public after evaluation by the High Board of Religious Affairs.

Secondly, following this tragic experience, the Presidency of Religious Affairs must carry out the necessary work for a legal ground and set up Diyanet Research Center and Diyanet Academy. Through various departments to be founded accordingly and within authority designated by law, various projects must be handed over to experts about the religious groups in and outside Turkey, religious developments, and questions on religion. And the results must be shared with the public. At Diyanet Academy, projects and programs must be carried out to train qualified muftis, preachers, advisors, attaches, and other personnel for internal administration of the Presidency of Religious Affairs.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS WILL BE REVIEWED

17. In order to prevent such religious structures from deceiving the public once again, religious education policies must be re-evaluated and religious education at all levels must be reviewed.

Freedom of religion includes individuals' belief in a religion and their practicing of that belief in every area such as individual, social, public, etc. When the state has a legal system that protects the individual's belief world, it stops people from feeling oppressed and leaning towards groups where they feel they can live their religion. In that respect, freedom of religion must be taken under protection by the state, and religious information and training in the broadest sense must be provided in a way that meets the society's need for reliable information.

The most influential factor in preventing orientation towards abusive religious groups is the sound and sufficient knowledge of an individual on religion. Necessary changes must be made in the educational systems to enable an authentic religious education at every level and to make students wholly comprehend the basic sources of religion like the Quran and Sunnah as well as the fundamental teachings.

Studies show that the reasons for leaning toward a religious community are not based on religion, they are psychological and sociological. Therefore, people who give religious education (imams, Quran course instructors, religious culture teachers, preachers, etc.) need to have a good knowledge of people's psychological needs and must be equipped with the competence to answer to their religious needs to prevent people from leaning towards abusive groups.

Raising ideal generations that prioritize the form of behavior based on basic principles in the Quran and Sunnah and who can turn it into a lifestyle must be the primary goal in the process of religious education. And religious education programs and curriculum must be revised to that end. Before anything, preserving the disposition of students beginning from primary education and providing education for a strong character must be the basis. Developing character in children, providing sufficient education to make them social individuals, and instill religious and national values into them must be top priorities. Instead of building a rote-learning mind in education, the focus should be on methods that make students research, question, discuss and that reinforce their reasoning and mental faculties. Similarly, the system must help them acquire a perspective that preserves the relationship and balance between mind and soul; the soul should not be sacrificed for the mind's sake or the mind should not be sacrificed for the soul's sake.



A rote-learning religious education system will hold the individual captive and even robotize them instead of setting them free. Because this method fabricates its own values, preventing the individual from escaping their impulses and the captivity of their environment. An individual that is not morally free will behave at the behest of whoever has their control. In rote-learning education, the already available information is considered “absolute and unchanging facts”; it is not questioned or examined. People settle for it and never produce new knowledge. The imposing style of rote-learning education system creates pressure over the individual’s mind and turns it into a stereotype.

When the individual who has received that kind of religious education accepts religious knowledge without questioning or making sense of it, this prevents religious facts from being fully understood. It prevents the comprehension of their richness and functions. And naturally, the student fails to turn the knowledge into something concrete that can be used in life, and as a result particularly the moral values lose their function.

Quran emphasizes the importance of knowledge, wisdom, and constant reasoning. It mentions the necessity of questioning. It recommends constantly reflecting on existence and revealed verses. It regards faith as a free choice. It forbids coercion in religion. Then, it is out of the question that the Quran would even approve of the rote-learning education system which prescribes blind commitment.

COOPERATIVE WORK WILL BE INITIATED WITH NGOS TO AVOID THE EMERGENCE OF SIMILAR GROUPS AND REPETITION OF SIMILAR MISTAKES

- 18. The Presidency of Religious Affairs must engage in collaborative work, especially through the High Board of Religious Affairs with nongovernmental religious/social organizations –without intervening in their liberties- that support religious service and religious education in Turkey to ensure they do not deviate from the main path of Islam that founded civilizations throughout history, that they keep away from any rampancy and understatement, and that they have more transparent and auditable bodies. Also, supreme boards should be established under the Presidency of Religious Affairs for religious and scholarly inspection and guidance.**

The freedom of religion and faith is under the guarantee of laws in our country. There are various official institutions to meet the public's need for knowledge and enlightenment in this area. And there are also numerous NGOs that operate in this field in many aspects. Institutions with a legal duty such as the Ministry of National Education and the Presidency of Religious Affairs must periodically carry out joint activities to pass on the "middle path", which our nation and people have inherited from past to present, to current and future generations free of any extremism and perversion, and to develop new educational policies, create teaching methods, and improve technological facilities together with various civil entities operating in the field of religious education. In this respect, state and civil entities must develop joint plans and projects at national and international conferences, workshops, and councils and put them into effect.

Different interpretations and approaches in religious and scholarly activities are surely considered richness and should be welcomed with respect as long as they do not cross the line of Quran and Sunnah and hurt the main path of Islam. However, as seen in the printed and visual media with striking examples, our people get confused by certain delusions which cannot be comprehended and cannot even be explained. With the aim of correcting such wrong statements with authentic information, properly illuminating our people, preventing various perverted observations and thoughts that cannot be accepted, and offering true and reliable guidance for our people in the search for truth, an extended advisory board will be established which will provide scholarly and intellectual support for the works of the High Board of Religious Affairs.



“Extended Advisory Board” will support the efforts of the High Board of Religious Affairs, the highest decision-making and advisory body under the Presidency of Religious Affairs, to help it more comprehensively fulfill its duties prescribed by law. The Board will carry out plans and projects both inside and outside the country. It will fill an important gap particularly in addressing the problems, demands, and expectations in rural organization, and in closely attending to regional religious matters right on site. For this reason, it is planned that the Board will be comprised of esteemed scholars and intellectuals who are retired or still working at the Presidency of Religious Affairs, at Theology or other faculties, or at institutions that provide conventional religious education.

It is also evident that all segments of society need some solid self-criticism with regard to how this entity organized, grew, and reached today. In seeking answers to how it has come to this point to prevent a similar situation, it should be taken into account that every related segment in society has made mistakes aside from Gülen’s evil intentions. FETO/PDY noticed the expectations of families about their children and undertook the burden of “raising” them; they exploited the religious sensitivities of pious masses, and turned the lack of personnel in bureaucracy into an opportunity; as a result, their organization grew further and further, up to the point of the “monster” we saw on the night of July 15. If we neglect our personal, family, scholarly, political, and social responsibilities at this point, it will be difficult to take necessary lessons from this tragic experience.

For that reason, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Higher Education Institution, and universities must immediately put forward and execute an emergency action plan to help the youth earn religious and national values and go through a strong training of personality-building.

Under the current circumstances, the narrow-minded approach and attitude of certain overstating and understating individuals, groups, and bodies to put the blame on the concept of “community” without basing it on scientific data and arguments is extremely risky and dangerous. In that case, in order to make sure a similar incident does not happen in other entities, it is important that religious/social organizations have transparency in terms of philosophy/program/goals and financial auditability. Legal arrangements must be made to that end; and communication and interaction channels between these bodies must be kept open and developed.

With a total rehabilitation, the state must put into effect an objective audit to make the field of civil society have a healthy structure where it consists of transparent and accountable organizations with a known field of activity. In this respect, practices that will cause non-governmental organizations to be dependent on the state must be avoided as well. Because it

enables groups with a secret agenda to infiltrate into the state through these institutions and causes the emergence of problems like favoritism and corruption; it also causes ordinary people to distance themselves from politicized “civil” organizations. Both outcomes hamper the healthy functioning and development of civil society.

Fundamental criteria like “justice, equality, trust, competence, and merit” must be properly utilized in public service, bureaucracy, academia, and all other areas. Religious, denominational, dispositional, local, ethnic, etc. senses of belonging that remain outside these principles should never be a reason for preference in appointments.



RELIGION-STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS IN OUR COUNTRY MUST BE BUILT ON SOLID GROUND

19. Throughout the history of the Republic, religion-driven structures emerged in the vacuum caused by a failure of sufficient and simultaneous institutionalization specific to our country in the periods of socio-political tension between the religion, the state, and the society. From time to time, these groups grew to an extent that hindered religious life of the public. It necessitates the reconsideration of relations between religion, state, and society in our country including building the required legal ground.

Founded on 3 March 1924 with a new mentality, the Presidency of Religious Affairs was only responsible with the areas of faith, worship, and morals as a state agency that managed religious affairs in society, enlightened the public about religion, and governed places of worship in the Republic. However, it is a known fact that the Presidency of Religious Affairs, which could do nothing except for funeral and prayer services, was unable to provide even the most basic religious education in that period. In the face of such limited circumstances, the masses could no longer meet their need for religious education and service from official and controllable bodies and had to encounter certain groups that provided guidance in these areas. The ongoing restrictions in both religious education and religious life caused these groups and their activities to go underground; and for a long time in Turkey, certain religious bodies attempted to meet the need for religious education and guidance.

Being of the same age as the Republic, the Presidency of Religious Affairs made an effort to fill the void as of the fifties; and important progress was made in just the organization phase in the seventies and the eighties. On 13 July 2010, the Presidency of Religious Affairs had its new organization law, and it now operates in over a hundred countries.

One of the legal duties of the Presidency of Religious Affairs is to enlighten society about religion. The real, unchanging mission of the Presidency is to fully promote the deep-rooted heritage of our nation in understanding religion and reflecting its graceful message in different segments of life, and to exert an effort to make it stronger.

On the other hand, the task of informing society about religion also involves the responsibility of accurately presenting the Islamic scholarly and intellectual life so far and the religious experience passed on from previous generations, and avoiding any arbitrary or baseless interpretation. It brings the two-sided responsibility of both producing accurate knowledge and enlightening society with it. Accurate knowledge means fighting superstition, misinformation,

ignorance, fabricated information, and religious abuses. In that context, the Presidency of Religious Affairs will ground its efforts on accurate religious knowledge and illuminate the public about wrongful tendencies and groups.

Since the day it was founded, the Presidency of Religious Affairs has acted with respect towards freedom of belief and religion, regarding differences of opinion based on religious references as grace and diversity. At the same time, legal power and responsibilities of the Presidency of Religious Affairs must be extended and solidified in order to stop exploitation and abuse of religion, prevent movements under the guise of religion from exploiting the belief and sentiments of the public, avoid any potential conflicts of religion, denomination, and disposition, and ensure social peace and unity.



STUDIES WILL BE CONDUCTED FOR CITIZENS AND ESPECIALLY THE YOUTH TO PREVENT SPIRITUAL DAMAGE

- 20. Special studies will be conducted and publications will be issued to avert the potential risk of many citizens and especially youth suffering a deep spiritual depression as a result of this treacherous attack which did not hesitate to tarnish religion and religious sentiment.**

All institutions and authorities, particularly MEB and DIB, must compile emergency action plans and take necessary concrete steps to equip millions of young citizens with religious, moral, and national values who are exposed to all sorts of illegal and harmful effects at the grip of the cyber world. In that context, “Youth Branches” must be founded operating under mosques as in the example of DITIB; adequate staff positions should be created in provinces and districts under the name of “Youth Counselor” and DIB must provide the necessary support in raising the ideal youth through these guides. Visual and printed publications must be created for youth in line with the understanding and opportunities of our time.

An institution that should address every segment of society, the Presidency of Religious Affairs is expected to meet this goal especially with the web platform and printed publications to be prepared for youth. There is urgent need for coming up with various projects for the 13-20 age group considering the curiosity, excitement, hobbies, and phobias that are specific to adolescence. In that respect, the ongoing “Youth Bookshelf Project” will fill a certain void in terms of printed publication. Consisting of four series –namely Faith, Consciousness, Culture, and Biography- and a hundred booklets, the project will appeal to 5-6 million young citizens in adolescence with the accurate and coherent knowledge it will offer. Each booklet will attract today’s youth not only with its volume, language, and tone but also with its print, typesetting, visual materials, and design.

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