

## The Council of Senior Scholars, Saudi Arabia

The Council of Senior Scholars has issued a number of statements condemning terrorism and violence perpetrated in the name of Islam. It has issued four lengthy and famous fatwas. The first was issued in August 1988 before the start of the wave of terrorism in the early nineties, the second in July 1998, and the third issued in September 2014. Below is the 2014 fatwa.

The Council of Senior Scholars issued following the conclusion of its eightieth session held in Riyadh starting from 13/09/2014, a detailed statement in which it rejects any and all acts of terrorism and violence perpetrated in the name of Islamic. The text of the statement is as follows:

"Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds and the victory is for pious and there in no aggression except on the oppressors. Prayer and peace be upon Abdullah and His Messenger, Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions and those who follow his path through to the Day of Judgment:

The Council of Senior Scholars has reviewed in its eightieth session held in Riyadh starting from 13/09/2014 its previous resolutions and statements about the threat of terrorism and the criminality of its means and financing. This included decision No. 239, dated March 11, 2010, which described terrorism as: a crime seeking to corrupt and destabilise the security of life and property, private and public, such as destroying housing, schools, hospitals, factories, bridges, blowing up or hijacking airplanes, or the usurpation of the public resources of the state such as oil and gas reserves and all such acts of corruption and vandalism are prohibited in Islam. Whosoever alleges that it is jihad is ignorant and misguided. It is in no way jihad for the sake of Allah.

Terrorism that fits this profile contrasts with the purposes of this great religion which came as a mercy to all due to its goodness for human beings in the present and the Hereafter. The Shariah seeks to develop this earth and preserve the system of co-existence and to ensure its continuity by promoting virtuous human beings.

The tolerance of this great religion - which is against terrorism and its excesses – is among the highlights of the Islamic Shariah and its loftiest purpose as in the verse, “And has imposed no difficulties on you in religion” [Al-Hajj: 78] and the authentic hadith, “The most loved religion to me is pure monotheism.”

These lofty purposes of Islamic law reflect the greatness and perfection of this religion, while extremism and terrorism - which corrupt the earth and destroy its crops and progeny – are in no

way part of Islam. They are among the greatest crimes defiling the sanctity of Allah and perpetrating injustice to His servants.

In light of the above, the Council of Senior Scholars decided the following:

First: Terrorism is a heinous crime perpetrating injustice and aggression and is rejected by the Shariah, sound disposition and common sense in all its forms. Its perpetrators deserve the severest punishments pursuant to the provisions of Islamic law and to ensure its sovereignty and the prohibition to wage war on the custodian of Muslims (wali al-amr). The Prophet, peace be upon him says, “Whosoever departs from obedience and opposed the group and dies, has died in a state of ignorance, and whosoever fought under the banner of a gang, is angered for the gang, calls to the gang or supports the gang and dies, has died in a state of ignorance. And whosoever leaves my Ummah and attacks the benevolent and sinful and does not does not discriminate between believers, nor fulfils his alliances, is not from me not I from him.” Narrated by Muslim.

Muslim youth should reflect on issues and should avoid being misled by corrupt phrases and slogans that encourage the disunity of the Ummah and claims that it is corrupt. Such calls are not of this religion but are the dressings of the ignorant and malevolent. The Shariah includes provisions for the punishment of those who undertake such acts and the need to deter and rebuke from committing such acts and to refer the case to the judiciary.

Second: Based on the foregoing, the Council of Senior Scholars support the efforts of the Saudi government to track those associated with terrorist and criminal groups such as Daesh, al-Qaeda, the Houthis and Hezbollah, or who belong to outside political groups to protect the country and its subjects from their evils and to prevent sedition. Everyone must cooperate in the eradication of this serious matter because it is cooperating in righteousness and piety as commanded by Allah in his saying “Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour: fear Allah: for Allah is strict in punishment.” [Al-Maidah: 2]

The Council warns against covering-up or harbouring them. These are major sins and fall within the general address of the Prophet, peace be upon him, “God damns whoever harbours a Muhdath.” Al-Bukhari and Muslim

The word ‘muhdath’ in this hadith refers to a person who spreads corruptions. If this stern warning is for those who shelter such people, how about those who assist or support their actions.

Third: The Council calls upon the knowledgeable to perform their duty and to intensify their efforts to guide people in this grave matter, to ensure that the truth is evident.

Fourth: The Council deplores the fatwas opinions that justify or encourage this crime due to the severity of its threat. It is not permissible in any way to justify the crimes of terrorism under any pretext. Allah has warned against issuing fatwas without knowledge and has explained that it is an act of the devil. He says, "O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, Lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of the evil one, for he is to you an avowed enemy. For he commands you what is evil and shameful, and that ye should say of Allah that of which ye have no knowledge." [Al-Baqarah: 168-169] and, "But say not - for any false thing that your tongues may put forth, - "This is lawful, and this is forbidden," so as to ascribe false things to Allah. For those who ascribe false things to Allah, will never prosper. (In such falsehood) is but a paltry profit; but they will have a most grievous Penalty." [Al-Nahl: 116-117] The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Whosoever invites to misguidance carries the sin of those who followed him and it does not detract anything from their sins." Narrated by Muslim.

Whosoever issued such fatwas or opinions justifying terrorism by whatever means; it becomes incumbent on the wali al-amr (custodian) to refer the case to the judiciary to hold them responsible to the Shariah as a means to advise the public, highlight the fault, and protect the religion. The knowledgeable have a duty to warn against false statements and highlight their falsehood. It is no secret that this is among the most important duties to advise in the name of Allah, His book, His Prophet and the imams of the Muslims. Such fatwas threaten to destabilise the security and sow discord and unrest. They target the youth and those who are unaware of the falsity of such fatwas. They seek to conceal their fraudulence with misappropriations of Islamic evidence to mislead others of their false aims. Such acts ridicule Islam and are rejected by any Muslim aware of the limits of Islamic law and its purposes. The falsehoods of such people are among the greatest causes of disunity in the Ummah and the dissemination of animosities between Muslims.

Fifth: The custodian is charged with preventing all those who ridicule religion and scholars. They present themselves as lenient in matters of religion and associate themselves with religiosity and religious institutions.

Sixth: The religion of Islam encourages unity which Allah enjoins in His book while prohibiting division and partisanship. Allah Almighty says, "And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves." [Al-Imran: 103] The Almighty says, "As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, thou hast no part

in them in the least: their affair is with Allah: He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did.” [Al-Anam: 159] The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, has disassociated himself with those who create division in their religion and form sects. This is evidence of the prohibition of division and that it is a major sin.

It is essential to know that in Islam it is necessary to maintain unity among Muslims and obeying the one who has been entrusted with the affairs of Muslims is akin to obeying Allah. Allah Almighty says, “O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you.” [Al-Nisa: 59] Abu Huraira may Allah be pleased with him said: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him said: “You must listen to your leader and obey him when you are at ease, difficulty, and with your pleasure and displeasure.” Narrated by Muslim. Abu Huraira may Allah be pleased with him said: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him said: “Whoever obeys me obeys Allah, and whoever disobeys me has disobeyed Allah; and whoever obeys the Amir [the leader] obeys me, and whoever disobeys him disobeys me.” Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. The companions and righteous predecessors followed this principle concerning obedience and establishing a single voice.

The above evidence led the Council of Senior Scholars to prohibit leaving for lands wherein conflict and discord prevail because that is a departure from the allegiance to the custodian and warns of the dire consequences of those who choose to defy this ruling.

Countries must track the movements of those who leave for conflict zones as they are advocates of misguidance and incite disobedience to the rulers. These are great sins. The Prophet, peace be upon him says, “There will be seditions and flews, and one how plan to divide and mesmerize you, be firm with him whoever how is” narrated by Muslim.

This is a warning to the advocates of deception, division and strife, and a warning to those who walk their path that they a grievous torment awaits them in the Hereafter."