

Original Title: الفتاوى الشرعية في القضايا العصرية

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www.answering-extremism.com

Saudi Arabia's Permanent Council of Senior Scholars on Terrorist Cells¹

All praise is due to Allāh, the Lord of all creations. May prayers and peace be upon the noblest of Prophets and Messengers, our prophet, Muhammad, and upon his family and companions.

The fifty-ninth meeting of The Permanent Council of the Senior Scholars of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia convened in the city of Taif beginning on 6/11/1424 Hijrah (corresponding to August 10, 2003) and discussed and reviewed what has taken place recently in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of bombings (in Riyadh) committed only to destroy and kill innocent people, resulting in terror and distress.

The Permanent Council also focused on the recent discoveries of illegal, dangerous weapon caches including explosive devices prepared for future bombings and destruction to be carried out in this land – the same land that protects the establishment of Islam and in which is the sacred mosque of Allāh (in Mecca), the direction of Muslims' prayers, and the mosque of Allāh's messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Preparations are being made to commit more of these crimes in order to infringe upon public safety and murder people, thereby causing such extreme devastation not specific to anyone or any place, (but rather indiscriminate attacks). This is one of the greatest, most dangerous obstacles preventing national public well-being.

¹ This fatwā was taken from a book called "Al-Fatāwā Ash-Shar'iyyah fī Al-Qadhāyā Al-'Asriyyah," a collection of various rulings by Muhammad Ibn Fahd Al-Husayn.

We also discussed in this meeting what's required of this country's scholars to clarify these dangers. There must be mutual cooperation between all individuals to expose and repel these evils and warn others from them. It is absolutely forbidden to remain silent about any information of danger that's being cultivated against public safety and security. The Permanent Council also holds the position that it's an obligation, in light of these matters, to clarify Islam's innocence to those non-Muslims living in our lands and to advise the nation to have compassion upon the Muslim youth so they are not used as tools for corruption and destruction, following deviant callers promoting tribulations and division. Allāh has taken a covenant from the people of knowledge to make clear such issues to the people. He said:

﴿ وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنَهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ فَنَبَذُوهُ
وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَاشْتَرَوْا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَبُئِسَ مَا يَشْتَرُونَ ﴾

**And remember when Allāh took a covenant from those who were given the
Scripture that they are to make it known and clear to mankind and not
conceal it.**

[Sūrah Āli-'Imrān, 3:187]

Such a covenant includes all of that as well as reminding people and warning them not to take any matter lightly that has to do with the preservation of peace in the land and safety from all types of danger. Therefore, the Permanent Council clarifies the following points:

First, such acts of devastation and corruption like bombings, killings, and destruction of property are criminal acts of enmity against innocent people, also resulting in the wasting of wealth respectfully spent (on structures, safety, etc.), among other things. Such a crime is well-deserving of the legal deterrent punishments in accordance with the legislative texts that preserve authority and forbid rebelling and opposing a nation's leadership. The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) says regarding this:

مَنْ خَرَجَ مِنَ الطَّاعَةِ وَفَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ فَمَاتَ مَاتَ مَيِّتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً، وَمَنْ قَاتَلَ تَحْتَ
رَايَةٍ عَمِيَّةٍ يَغْضَبُ لِعَصَبَةٍ أَوْ يَدْعُو إِلَى عَصَبَةٍ أَوْ يَنْصُرُ عَصَبَةً فَقُتِلَ فَقِتْلَةٌ
جَاهِلِيَّةٌ، وَمَنْ خَرَجَ عَلَى أُمَّتِي يَضْرِبُ بَرَّهَا وَفَاجِرَهَا وَلَا يَتَحَاشَى مِنْ مُؤْمِنِهَا
وَلَا يَفِي لِذِي عَهْدٍ عَهْدَهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَلَسْتُ مِنْهُ

“Whoever renounces obedience (to the leader) thereby separating himself from the main body (of Muslims) and then dies, he dies the death of Jāhiliyyah (the pre-Islamic state of ignorance). And whoever fights under a banner, yet blind (to the cause for which he’s fighting), or whoever gets angry based solely on nationalism (racism, factionalism, etc.), calls to nationalism, or supports nationalism and then he is killed, he is killed in the state of Jāhiliyyah. Whoever rebels against my nation, killing both the righteous and wicked (indiscriminately), not even sparing the devout believers, and not fulfilling the obligation towards those given a pledge (of security) – then such a person has nothing to do with me and I have nothing to do with him.”²

Anyone who claims these destructive crimes and the reasons for bombings and killings are forms of Jihād, then such a person is totally ignorant and completely astray. They have nothing at all to do with Jihād for the sake of Allāh. So, from what has been presented, it should now be apparent and known that what those people committed, and those who may do likewise, is nothing but a crime of corruption, destruction, and complete misguidance. It’s incumbent upon them to fear Allāh (ﷻ), return back to Him, repent and to closely examine the current affairs and not be hasty to relay everything heard of false rumors intended to split and divide the nation, causing discord among its people. Most of these rumors contain nothing of truth with regards to the religion, being only deceptions of ignorant people and conspirators. The religious texts contain punishments for whoever commits crimes like these as well as the obligation to deter and prevent those who may commit similar crimes. Such people must be reported and tried by the legitimate authorities.

² Recorded by Muslim (no. 1848) from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه).

Second, after clarifying the previous point, the Permanent Council supports what the country, may Allāh honor it with Islam, has begun doing of pursuing and persecuting this group, exposing them, protecting the land and servants from their evil, and thus repelling such tribulations from entering the homes of Muslims and safeguarding their children. It is compulsory on everyone to collectively cooperate to eradicate this dangerous problem because doing so is a form of cooperating in righteousness and piety which Allāh (ﷻ) commands in His statement:

﴿ وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ﴾

Cooperate with one another in righteousness and piety, but do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allāh.

[Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:2]

The Permanent Council also warns everyone from concealing or protecting these people, harboring or accommodating them. Doing so is a major sin that is included in the prophet's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) general threat:

لَعَنَ اللهُ مَنْ أَوْى مُحْدِثًا

“May Allāh curse the one who protects or accommodates an innovator (anyone who introduces foreign matters into the religion).”³

The scholars have also explained the “innovator” mentioned in this ḥadīth to be anyone who causes corruption on earth. So, if such a severe threat is regarding someone who merely accommodates them, then how much more severe would the case be for those who actually support and assist them in their actions?

Third, the Permanent Council calls out to the people of knowledge to fulfill what is required of them by concentrating on guiding the public regarding this issue in order to clarify the truth about it.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 17) and Muslim (no. 1978) from the ḥadīth of 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Fourth, the Permanent Council condemns the issuing of certain religious verdicts and personal opinions that allow crimes like these or encouraging them because this is really the most hazardous and disgraceful origin of these matters. Allāh has already shown the severity of giving religious verdicts without knowledge, warning His servants from it, and clarifying that it is from the affairs of Satan. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُواتِ الشَّيْطَانِ
إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

Oh mankind, eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely, he is a clear enemy to you. He commands you only what is evil and sinful, and that you should say things about Allāh that you do not know.

[Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:168-169]

And He (ﷻ) said:

﴿ وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَا تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هَذَا حَلَالٌ وَهَذَا حَرَامٌ لِتَفْتَرُوا عَلَى
اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُونَ مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ وَلَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴾

And do not say anything that your tongues may put forth falsely: “This is lawful and this is forbidden,” so as to invent lies against Allāh. Certainly, those who invent lies against Allāh will never prosper. A passing brief enjoyment (will be theirs), but they will have a painful torment.

[Sūrah al-Naḥl, 16:116-117]

And He also says (ﷻ):

﴿ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ
عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا ﴾

And follow not (do not say, do not do, do not witness, etc.) **that of which you have no knowledge. Certainly, the hearing, the sight, and the heart - of each of those you will be questioned.**

[Sūrah al-Isrā', 17:36]

It's also been authentically narrated that Allāh's messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

مَنْ دَعَا إِلَى ضَلَالَةٍ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ مِثْلُ آثَامِ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ لَا يَنْقُصُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ آثَامِهِمْ شَيْئًا

“Whoever calls to misguidance, there's upon him a sin like the sin of whoever follows him without diminishing anything from their own sins.”⁴

So, anyone who issues religious verdicts or propagates personal opinions that allow these kinds of crimes, then it's incumbent upon the authorities to apprehend him and take the necessary legal actions against him as a form of advice to the nation, a pardon to those (non-Muslims) living under Muslim rule, and a protection of the religion. And it is required from anyone to whom Allāh has given knowledge to warn against these statements of falsehood, explaining their maliciousness, and exposing their lies. No doubt, this is one of the most important obligations today and a way of giving sincere consideration for Allāh, His book, His messenger, the leaders of the Muslims, and the common people. The danger of such baseless religious verdicts is even more severe when they're intended to jeopardize public safety and security, and cultivate trials and tribulation among people. This is nothing but speaking about Allāh's religion with ignorance and personal objectives in order to deceive the youth and those having no knowledge of the realities of these verdicts. They fool them with weak arguments to make their own evil intentions appear correct. These crimes are horrid and detestable in the religion of Islam and none of the Muslims having the slightest knowledge of Islamic limits would ever condone them, especially after understanding the noble goals and objectives

⁴ Recorded by Muslim (no. 2674) from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) and by al-Tirmidhī (no. 2674) and Abū Dāwūd (no. 4709).

of Islam. The actions of these speakers (those who issue these destructive verdicts) are some of the greatest means of splitting and dividing the nation, spreading enmity and hatred among its people.

Fifth, the authorities must prevent people like these who have the audacity against the religion and its scholars to influence people to take the matters of religion lightly, opposing it and its adherents, trying to connect what's happened of such crimes with religiousness and religious organizations. The Permanent Council also denies the claim associating these destructive actions with our school curriculums, and also condemns taking advantage of these recent incidents as means of taking the rich resources of this blessed land which has been established upon the 'Aqīdah of the Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ (righteous predecessors), taking from the rectifications called to by the scholar, Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb.

Sixth, the religion of Islam has come with the command of social unity and Allāh prescribes this in His Book, forbidding division and any biased sectarianism. He (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا﴾

And hold fast collectively to the rope of Allāh all together and do not be divided.

[Sūrah Āli-'Imrān, 3:103]

And He (ﷻ) says:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ﴾

Indeed, those who divide their religion and break up into sects, you

(Muhammad) have nothing to do with them in the least.

[Sūrah al-Anā'm, 6:159]

Allāh disassociates His messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) from those who split up their religion and divide into separate factions. This proves the forbiddance of division and shows it is a major sin.

It is well-known that one of the fundamental necessities of the religion is the command to adhere to the main community and to obey whoever assumes authority of the Muslims in what they instruct of obedience to Allāh. He (ﷺ) says:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ﴾

Oh you who believe, obey Allāh and obey the messenger, and those in authority among you.

[Sūrah al-Nisā', 4:59]

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allāh's messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

عَلَيْكَ السَّمْعَ وَالطَّاعَةَ فِي عُسْرِكَ وَيُسْرِكَ وَمَنْشَطِكَ وَمَكْرَهِكَ...

“You must listen to and obey (the leader) during hardship, ease, (your times of) activity, and even in what you hate...”⁵

Also narrated by Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), the messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ وَمَنْ يُطِعِ الْأَمِيرَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَنِي وَمَنْ يَعِصِ الْأَمِيرَ فَقَدْ عَصَانِي

“Whoever obeys me has obeyed Allāh, and whoever disobeys me disobeys Allāh. Whoever obeys the leader obeys me, and whoever disobeys the leader has disobeyed me.”⁶

⁵ Recorded by Muslim (no. 1836).

⁶ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 7137) and Muslim (no. 1835).

The Salaf of this nation from the companions (رضي الله عنهم) and those who came after them have always understood this – the obligation of listening to and obeying the leaders.

After mentioning all that has preceded, the Permanent Council warns those callers to misguidance, to problems, to division – those who emerged in recent times turning against the Muslims, trying to persuade them to disobey the leaders and to rebel and oppose them. Those are some of the greatest forbidden sins as the prophet (صلى الله عليه) said:

إِنَّهُ سَتَكُونُ هَنَاتٌ وَهَنَاتٌ فَمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقَ أَمْرَ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ وَهِيَ جَمِيعٌ فَاضْرِبُوهُ بِالسَّيْفِ
كَأَيُّنَا مَنْ كَانَ

“There will certainly come different kinds of evil. So, whoever tries to disrupt and divide the affairs of this nation while they are united, you should strike him with the sword whoever he may be.”⁷

There is a threat of punishment in this life and the hereafter in this ḥadīth to people who call to misguidance and division and their extremist followers. It is essential to adhere to this sound and moderate religion and to stay on the straight path based upon the Quran and Sunnah and according to the understanding of the companions (رضي الله عنهم) and those who followed them in righteousness. It is also essential to raise the next generation of youth upon this sound methodology and straight path so that that may be safe, with the help of Allāh, from the evil tendencies and effects of these callers to deviance, calamities, and division...

⁷ Recorded by Muslim (no. 1852) from the ḥadīth of ‘Arfajah Ibn Shurayh (رضي الله عنه). Of course, this is an allowance for capital punishment to be determined and carried out by legitimate leaderships, not by individuals.