



In the report “Turkey’s Evolving Dynamics”, published recently by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, there is a section in which our Honorary President Mr. Fethullah Gülen is mentioned and inaccurate allegations are made against him.

It is claimed in your publication that “as Gülen’s unwillingness to condemn the 1997 coup demonstrates, the Gülen Movement has a longer-term strategy aimed at gradually changing the system from within rather than through confrontation,” and that “. . . before his departure from Turkey in 2000 after being charged with anti-secular activities, Gülen advised his followers to ‘move in the arteries of the system, without anyone noticing your existence, until you reach all the power centers.’” The report also states that “with its huge financial resources, the Gülen Movement has the financial leverage to realize his aims,” and that “the Movement is influential in the police force” (pp. xi, 5–6).

We have to state clearly that all of these claims are false and unsubstantiated accusations, which are produced by ideologically antagonistic groups in order to defame Mr. Gülen. These groups strictly oppose European and global integration; they aim at isolating Turkey from the outside world, seek a militarist type of administration, and are renowned for their anti-democratic ambitions and actions. Members of these circles composed texts and books, doctored media footage, and disseminated them through media outlets in an effort to make Mr. Gülen appear as a criminal in the public eye and in the view of the judiciary. These attempts to destroy Mr. Gülen’s good reputation took place during an extraordinary period, which is referred to as a “post-modern coup.” Many more intellectuals, journalists, authors, thinkers, artists, politicians, and others from diverse ideologies or beliefs suffered similar experiences during such periods when democracy was periodically “suspended” in Turkey.

Following the publication and broadcasting of these accusations in certain media outlets, a criminal case was filed against Mr. Gülen. All of these claims were investigated, and the courts of law established that Mr. Gülen did not commit any of the alleged crimes and acquitted him by unanimous vote. Mr. Gülen’s acquittal was also confirmed by the Supreme Court, again unanimously. In the same case, evidence was presented to the court revealing the fact that Mr. Gülen was the victim of a plot devised by a certain group.

It is alleged on page 6 of the report that “Gülen advised his followers to ‘move in the arteries of the system, without anyone noticing your existence, until you reach all the power centers,’” which is another unfounded accusation. As an admired and widely respected scholar, Mr. Gülen has always had a great many visitors from all walks of life. Visitors have always asked for his opinion and advice on a variety of subjects. During such a visit, one of the visitors described his personal situation and explained that he



suffered from discrimination and oppression due to his religious beliefs. Mr. Gülen advised him to be resolute in his beliefs and endure oppression with patience. However, this conversation was made public with a distortion, and eventually presented to the court. As mentioned above, the fact that similar doctored videos were prepared and disseminated by a certain group with the aim of attacking Mr. Gülen's reputation was proved in evidence presented to the court. Mr. Gülen was cleared of these charges as the court rejected them, having seen no criminal element.

For further reference, we would like to present some brief information on Mr. Gülen and his activities:

Mr. Gülen served for a long time as a state preacher working under the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs, a constitutional body under the Prime Minister. Along with his public service, he has been recognized as a prominent intellectual, and he is the author of a number of books. Just as many philosophers and intellectuals have inspired people around them, it is very normal that Mr. Gülen's thoughts and works have been embraced by many people in Turkey and around the world.

An objective analysis of Mr. Gülen's works would bring to light the fact they have been prepared to serve the good of humanity. Mr. Gülen is the honorary president of the Rumi Forum. He is engaged in tolerance and dialogue activities at his personal initiative and as part of the activities of this foundation. He has called on the members and communities of different faiths and religious schools of thought, people of no religious affiliation, and people with different political orientations, to come together under the common denominator of being human, to develop ways of peaceful coexistence, to accept everyone in their own positions, and to engage in cultural exchange in the spirit of dialogue and reconciliation.

To claim that Mr. Gülen and those who have been inspired by him harbor secret intentions and a long-term strategy is an extremely grave accusation. All of these civil activities are being conducted lawfully for peaceful goals in a spirit of volunteerism. We point here to the fact that there has never been any criminal verdict issued against Mr. Gülen or against activities of individuals and institutions that are associated with him in any country around the world. It is entirely erroneous to consider these people's educational, socio-cultural or commercial activities, which are essential exercises of their human rights, as the activities of a criminal organization. The courts have already ruled that no such organization in this sense exists, and there is no such "influence" as claimed or any illegal activity associated with Mr. Gülen in the police force or any other state body.



We would also like to make clear that Mr. Gülen did not depart “from Turkey in 2000 after being charged with antiseccular activities” as claimed in the report. He came to the USA on March 22, 1999, after making an appointment with the Mayo Clinic for an examination of his heart.

The statement that “As Gülen’s unwillingness to condemn the 1997 coup demonstrates, the Gülen Movement has a longer-term strategy aimed at gradually changing the system from within rather than through confrontation,” is a perverse deviation from the truth and has no base in facts. Such an approach entails a belief that everyone in the world has secret intentions and does grave injustice to Mr. Gülen and those who have been inspired by him. The ruling of the courts has confirmed that such accusations are unfounded.

All systems of law take into consideration individuals’ actions. Judging people based on alleged secret intentions smacks of medieval mentality or McCarthyism. Mr. Gülen’s life of seventy years, his activities, and his works are easily available, and we would expect them to be referred to while forming opinions about him.

We are very appreciative of the contribution of CSIS in informing American policy-makers and promoting democracy around the world. Hoping to contribute to the impartial and more accurate analysis that the CSIS is renowned for, we would greatly appreciate your posting of this response to your website alongside the report.

Yours sincerely,

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President, Rumi Forum