

# A Call for Action:

# Countering the Devastating Impacts of the "FETO" Label Against the Hizmet Movement living in Canada

Northern Justice Watch

Campaign Dossier

info@northernjusticewatch.org



# **Table of Contents**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<u> 4</u>
CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND OF THE CAMPAIGN	7
WHAT IS THE HIZMET MOVEMENT?	7
HIZMET MOVEMENT IN CANADA	7
HIZMET MOVEMENT AND CANADIAN AUTHORITIES	8
WHY IS THIS CAMPAIGN NEEDED?	9
OBJECTIVES OF THE CAMPAIGN	10
RESEARCH ON THE DEVASTATING IMPACTS OF THE "FETO" LABEL	<u> 11</u>
Research Method	11
Research Findings	11
Hate-Motivated Crimes Against Hizmet Members	11
Targeted By the Turkish Embassy/Consulate in Canada	13
Targeted By the Turkish Embassy/Consulate in Other Countries	14
Mapping the Countries Where Participants were Targeted by Turkish Embassies/Consulates	14
Change in Lifestyles After Hate Crime Victimization	15
Impacts of the "FETO" Label and the Corresponding Hate Crimes	16
Incitement of Hatred through the "FETO" Label	17
Impacts of the "FETO" Label on Individual and Family Lives	18
Impacts of the "FETO" Label on the Hizmet Community	18
Impacts of the "FETO" Label on Public Safety	19
International Impacts / Transnational Repression	20
LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT	<u> 21</u>
CALLS FOR ACTION	22
THE ROLES OF THE CANADIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	22



THE ROLES OF THE CANADIAN POLICE FORCES	. 23
THE ROLES OF THE HIZMET COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND MEMBERS	. 24



## **Executive Summary**

#### **Background**

- The victims of hate speech can suffer devastating effects. If a group is labelled as deviant, dangerous, or inferior through a political campaign, serious consequences can occur, even up to crimes against humanity and genocide.
- o In recent years, the Turkish government under President Erdogan has increasingly oppressed the Hizmet Movement, a transnational social and religious movement inspired by the teachings of Fethullah Gülen. Hate speech against the movement has been a significant part of this purge, and its negative impacts have extended beyond Turkey's borders.
- The term "FETO" has played a crucial role in this oppression, seeking to label the movement as a terrorist group despite the lack of any credible evidence indicating any violent act of the movement. Many individuals have fled to Canada and other Western countries to escape this oppression, but unfortunately, the effects of the hate speech have followed them in various ways.
- The purpose of this campaign is to ensure the prevention of this specific hate speech through legal, administrative, and social means and to raise awareness about its devastating impacts.
- The impacts of the "FETO" label and other hate speeches can be categorized under three groups:
  - a. Individual-level impacts
  - b. Community-level impacts
  - c. Impacts on public safety in Canada

#### Research on the Impacts of the "FETO" label

- In a partnership between the NJW and Lakehead University, a survey-based research study
  was conducted to understand the impacts of the "FETO" label and corresponding hate
  crimes on the Hizmet Community in Canada. Some of the key findings are as follows:
- Out of 318 survey participants, the majority of the participants were subjected to verbal attacks in both Turkey (88%) and Canada (59%), as well as online hate crimes in both Turkey (86%) and Canada (65%).



- Other types of hate crimes such as threats, physical attacks, property attacks, and institutional damage were also experienced by a significant proportion of the participants in both Turkey and Canada.
- Nearly half of the participants (54%) reported that they were targeted by the Turkish Embassy or Consulates in Canada at least once because of their affiliation with or support towards the Hizmet Movement. 40% of the participants experienced this in other countries including but not limited to Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Iraq, Pakistan, the United States, and Senegal.
- Participants made significant changes in their lives to avoid oppression and hate crimes including moving abroad (80%), starting to avoid walking in certain places (69%), improving their home security (60%), starting to avoid attending community/cultural events (60%), stopping hanging with people from outside of the Hizmet Community (59%), changing neighbourhoods (52%), moving their house or apartment (49%), improving their vehicle security (48%), stopping going out at night (46%), changing children's schools (44%), changing jobs (42%), closing their business (42%), changing the location of their business (36%), stopping using public transportation (33%), and changing how they dressed (30%).
- o 77% of the participants had more than 40 out of 80 points in the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) scale due to their hate crime victimization. The average PTSD score among the participants was 52.6. 35% of the participants had a score higher than 60 out of 80, indicating a worrisome level of PTSD.
- Participants reported that the widespread use of the label incites attacks of the criminal justice system in Turkey against the Hizmet members (94%), physical attacks against (89%), attacks against their properties (89%), online attacks (92%), and verbal attacks (92%) against them.
- The majority of participants stated that the label had a negative impact on their mental health (89%), caused them to question their Hizmet identity (55%), created family issues (59%), led to their children distancing themselves from them (52%), and caused their children to distance themselves from Hizmet institutions and activities (51%).
- The use of the label made some of the participants' immigration processes in Canada more challenging (19%), led to legal problems with Canadian public institutions (17%), and made it more difficult to find employment in Canada (19%).
- The label provokes assaults against the Hizmet establishments (90%). Hizmet supporters refrain from engaging with Hizmet institutions and activities due to this label (82%) and face exclusion from Turkish society as a whole (97%).



- Due to the use of the label, participants distance themselves from Hizmet institutions and activities (90%), think that Hizmet supporters are marginalized in Canadian society (28%), and both the Canadian society (29%) and government (22%) approach Hizmet institutions and activities with suspicion.
- The use of the "FETO" label has had detrimental effects on public safety in Canada, according to the majority of participants. Participants expressed their concerns about the growing polarization between Turkish communities and the Hizmet movement (92%) as well as between Muslim communities and the Hizmet movement (67%).
- A significant number of participants (87%) expressed concern about the Turkish government's espionage activities targeting Hizmet movement sympathizers in Canada, as well as those residing outside of Turkey in general (92%).
- Participants are worried about the alarming rise in transnational repression activities carried out by the Turkish government, such as kidnapping, surveillance, assaults, and threats, against Hizmet sympathizers in Canada (67%) and those living outside of Turkey (92%).

#### **Calls for Action**

- We propose a motion to be moved at the Canadian federal parliament to officially recognize the serious threats posed by the widespread use of the "FETO" label as hate speech, marking a vital step towards addressing this issue comprehensively.
- The motion at the federal parliament should call for a coordinated response involving Canadian federal, provincial, and municipal authorities to proactively tackle hate speech and hate crimes directed at Hizmet supporters and their institutions in Canada.
- The Canadian police forces should be aware of the multi-faceted threats caused by the use of "FETO" label and corresponding hate crimes and effectively investigating the allegations.
- The Hizmet community organizations and members should report the hate speech and hate crimes against them immediately to the relevant hate crimes unit of the police in their jurisdiction.
- The Hizmet community organizations should form partnerships with relevant authorities to develop victim-support mechanisms to protect their members from the psychological and sociological negative impacts of the hate speech and hate crimes.
- The resilience of the families and young generations in the Hizmet community should be improved through education, mentorship, and rehabilitation programs in partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations.



## **Context And Background of The Campaign**

# What is the Hizmet Movement?

The Hizmet movement, also known as the Gülen movement, is a transnational social and religious movement inspired by the teachings of Fethullah Gülen, a Turkish Islamic scholar, preacher, and former imam. Gülen, who has lived in self-imposed exile in the United States since 1999, promotes a moderate form of Sunni Islam that emphasizes altruism, hard work, education, and interfaith dialogue.

The movement's origins can be traced back to the late 1960s when Gülen began attracting a following as a preacher in Turkey. Over the decades, the movement has expanded beyond Turkish borders, establishing a global network of schools, charities, media outlets, and dialogue centers. It has been particularly noted for its significant investment in education, from primary schools to universities, and has been involved in providing humanitarian aid and relief efforts.

Hizmet, which means "service" in Turkish, encapsulates the movement's ethos of serving the community. Followers of the movement are encouraged to lead lives dedicated to selflessness, community service, and education. The movement has no formal structure or membership, and its followers often refer to themselves simply as "volunteers."

However, for the last decade, the Hizmet movement has increasingly been subject to oppression, particularly within Turkey. The Turkish government accuses the Hizmet movement and Fethullah Gülen of orchestrating the failed coup attempt in July 2016, a charge both Gülen and the movement deny. Since then, the Turkish government has designated the movement as a terrorist organization, leading to widespread purges, arrests, and persecution of individuals associated with the movement within Turkey and in some cases, abroad.

The victimization of Hizmet movement affiliates following the coup attempt includes mass arrests, loss of jobs, harassment, and a widespread campaign of hate speech, contributing to an environment of fear and repression for those associated with the movement. This has led to significant international concern regarding human rights violations and the suppression of dissent in Turkey.

# Hizmet Movement in Canada

In Canada, the Hizmet movement has established itself as a peaceful and contributing part of the country's diverse multicultural tapestry. Much like its global counterparts, the movement



in Canada focuses primarily on interfaith dialogue, education, and community service. It operates a number of schools and educational institutions, cultural centers, and interfaith organizations aimed at fostering dialogue, understanding, and harmony among different communities.

Hizmet's schools and tutoring centers in Canada are known for their academic rigour and emphasis on science and mathematics, alongside a commitment to fostering ethical values and social responsibility in students. Moreover, the movement's cultural centers and dialogue organizations host various events, panels, and discussions, bringing together people of different faiths and backgrounds to promote mutual understanding and respect.

Through its involvement in charitable activities, the movement also aims to give back to the Canadian community. This includes participating in food drives, environmental initiatives, and aid for the homeless, reflecting the movement's broader ethos of service ("Hizmet").

The Canadian context provides the Hizmet movement with a stable and accepting environment to operate. Unlike in Turkey, where the movement faces significant persecution, in Canada, it is seen as part of the pluralistic landscape of civil society organizations contributing positively to the country's social fabric. The movement's focus on education, dialogue, and community service aligns with Canada's values of diversity, inclusivity, and community engagement.

# <u> Hizmet Movement and Canadian Authorities</u>

Since the coup attempt in 2016, thousands of people affiliated with the movement have emigrated to Canada or sought asylum in Canada. Currently, the estimated number of Hizmet movement members is 15,000.

To inform the decisions that will be made on the cases of the members of the Hizmet Movement by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) of Canada, a Responses to Information Request (RIRs) research report was published on the IRB website.

In summary, the report indicated three main threats to the people affiliated with the movement

I- Monitoring of Hizmet Supporters: Since 2015, Turkish diplomatic missions have prioritized monitoring and spying on Hizmet supporters abroad. Various organizations and entities, including Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Intelligence Organization, and Directorate of Religious Affairs, are involved in these monitoring activities. These efforts have included abductions and extralegal deportations of Turkish nationals from various countries.



The Turkish government has identified followers of Fethullah Gülen, the founder of the Hizmet movement, as terrorists, leading to widespread surveillance and targeting of these individuals globally.

- 2- Treatment of Family Members in Turkey: Family members of suspected Hizmet supporters in Turkey face severe consequences. Since the 2016 attempted coup, Turkish decrees have broadened to include even the spouses and children of those associated with the Hizmet movement. These family members often face social exclusion, intimidation, arrest, and detention. They may also lose jobs, social security benefits, and face property confiscation. In some instances, the Turkish government has even suspended disability and social benefits for these families.
- 3- Treatment of Returnees: Hizmet supporters are at grave risk upon returning to Turkey. They face immediate arrest and potential torture, regardless of whether their return is voluntary or involuntary. Many avoid travelling to Turkey due to the risk of persecution. The Turkish government's extensive information databases and surveillance practices make it likely that even failed asylum seekers with connections to the Hizmet movement will be identified and targeted.

# Why Is This Campaign Needed?

The derogatory label "FETO" directed at the Hizmet Movement fuels animosity, laying the groundwork for further abuse, crimes against humanity, and persecution of its members in Turkey and internationally. Recent studies reveal that the Hizmet supporters seeking asylum in Canada since 2016 have faced escalating hate crimes and speech, resulting in severe psychological distress, including widespread PTSD. This has caused significant harm to the community and raised public safety concerns.

Genocide and crimes against humanity often evolve from extended periods of hate speech and incitement against targeted groups. The 1994 Rwandan genocide against Tutsis is a notable example, where long-standing political hostility and media propaganda spurred mass violence and murder of Tutsis, leading to approximately 800,000 deaths within a mere 100 days.

While the situation of the Hizmet Movement in Turkey has not escalated to the extremes of the Rwandan genocide, the increasing use of hate speech, notably the "FETO" label, and a rise in hate crimes against its members signal an alarming trend. Proactive legislative and administrative measures are crucial to avert further tragic consequences. This campaign is dedicated to elevating awareness of this critical issue and ensuring that hate speech and related crimes against Hizmet supporters are addressed effectively in Canada.



# Objectives of the campaign

- 1. **Legislative Advocacy:** Advocate for legislative and administrative changes to address and penalize hate speech and crimes, ensuring that such acts against Hizmet supporters are recognized and adequately responded to by the legal system.
- 2. **Preventive Measures:** Initiate preventive measures to stop the escalation of hate speech into more violent acts, drawing lessons from historical examples.
- 3. **Raise Awareness:** Increase public understanding and awareness about the hate speech and crimes directed against the Hizmet Movement, emphasizing the severity and implications of such acts.
- 4. **Educational Campaigns:** Develop and implement educational campaigns to inform the public, especially in Canada, about the consequences of hate speech and how it can escalate into more severe forms of violence and persecution.
- 5. **Monitor and Report Hate Crimes:** Establish a mechanism for monitoring, reporting, and documenting hate crimes and speech against Hizmet Movement supporters, to provide tangible data and evidence of these incidents.
- 6. **Support Victims:** Offer psychological and legal support to victims of hate crimes and speech, particularly those who have sought asylum in Canada, to help them deal with trauma and navigate legal challenges.
- 7. **Community Engagement:** Engage with various community groups, human rights organizations, and governmental bodies to build a broad coalition against hate speech and crimes targeting the Hizmet Movement.
- 8. **Promote Inclusivity and Tolerance:** Foster an environment of inclusivity and tolerance within society, countering the negative stereotypes and misconceptions about the Hizmet Movement.



## Research on The Devastating Impacts of the "FETO" Label

In a partnership between Lakehead University and Northern Justice Watch, a study was recently conducted to explore the impacts of the "FETO" label and other hate speech on the Hizmet community in Canada. Findings have shown that this derogatory term has devastating impacts at four levels:

- 1. Impacts on Hizmet Movement sympathizers
- 2. Impacts on the Hizmet community, their organizations, and activities
- 3. Impacts on public safety in Canada
- 4. International Impacts / Transnational Repression

## RESEARCH METHOD

We conducted a survey with the members of the Hizmet Movement who live in Canada (N = 318). The majority of them (82%) moved to Canada and sought asylum after July 2016. In the survey, we asked them about the impacts of the hate speech against the movement, especially the "FETO" label. 65% of the participants were male and 35% of them were female. The average age of the participants were 39 and their ages ranged between 18 and 70. Participants mostly live in Ontario (83%), while we had some participants from Alberta (8%), Quebec (N = 3%), British Columbia (N = 3%), Saskatchewan (0.3%), Manitoba (0.3%) and Nunavut (0.3%).

#### RESEARCH FINDINGS

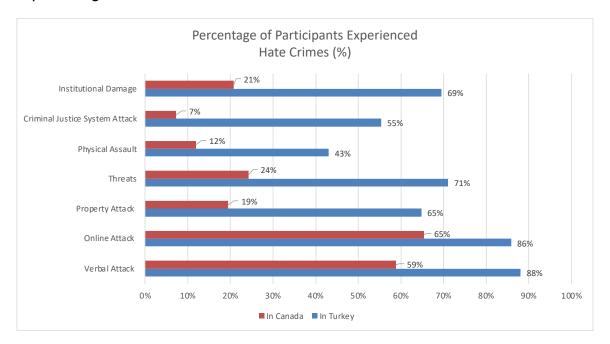
#### **Hate-Motivated Crimes Against Hizmet Members**

We inquired from the participants about their encounters with hate crimes in Turkey and Canada as a result of their affiliation with the Hizmet Movement. In general, a greater number of participants faced hate crimes in Turkey compared to Canada. Upon analyzing the specific forms of hate crime victimizations, we discovered that most participants were subjected to verbal attacks in both Turkey (88%) and Canada (59%), as well as online hate crimes in both Turkey (86%) and Canada (65%).

Regarding threats, 71% of them experienced hate crimes in Turkey, while 24% encountered threats in Canada. In Turkey, 69% experienced attacks against their Hizmet institutions, while in Canada, 21% experienced damage to their institutions. Property attacks were also experienced at a high rate in Turkey (65%) while a smaller but significant percentage of the participants experienced property attacks in Canada (19%). In terms of physical assault, 43% of them experienced it in Turkey, while 12% faced physical assault in Canada. Additionally, 55%

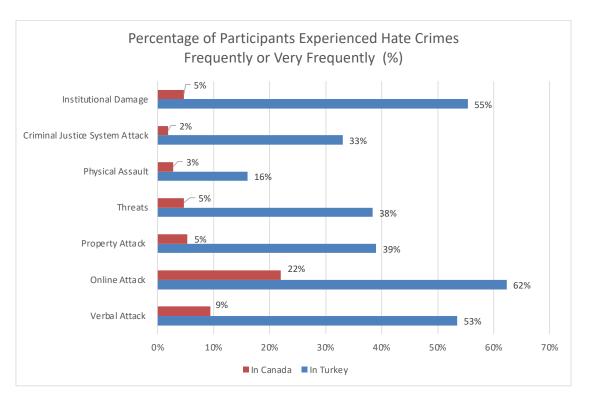


of the participants were targeted by the criminal justice system in Turkey, and 7% reported experiencing it in Canada.



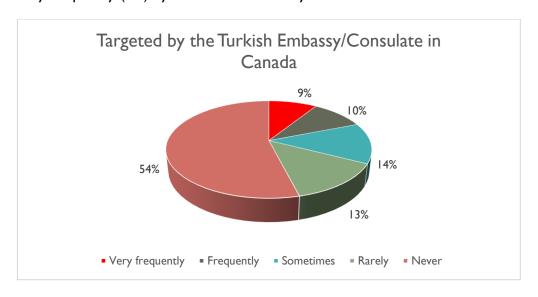
We also asked how frequently they experienced these hate crimes in Turkey and Canada. Those who reported that they frequently or very frequently experienced online hate crimes in Turkey was 62% while the same rate for online hate crime victimizations in Canada was 22%. The other types of hate crimes were also experienced frequently or frequently by a high percentage of participants in Turkey while a smaller percentage experienced all types of hate crimes during their life in Canada. These crimes encompass verbal attacks (53% in Turkey; 9% in Canada), institutional damage (55% in Turkey; 5% in Canada), property attacks (39% in Turkey; 5% in Canada), threats (38% in Turkey; 5% in Canada), being unjustly targeted by the criminal justice system (33% in Turkey; 2% in Canada).





#### **Targeted By the Turkish Embassy/Consulate in Canada**

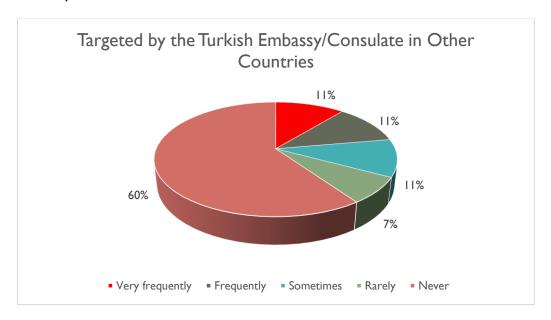
Participants were asked whether and how frequently they were targeted by the Turkish Embassy or Consulates in Canada because of their affiliation with or support towards the Hizmet Movement. Nearly half of the participants (54%) reported that they were targeted at least once. A substantial portion of the participants were targeted either frequently (10%) or very frequently (9%) by the Turkish Embassy or Consulates in Canada.





#### **Targeted By the Turkish Embassy/Consulate in Other Countries**

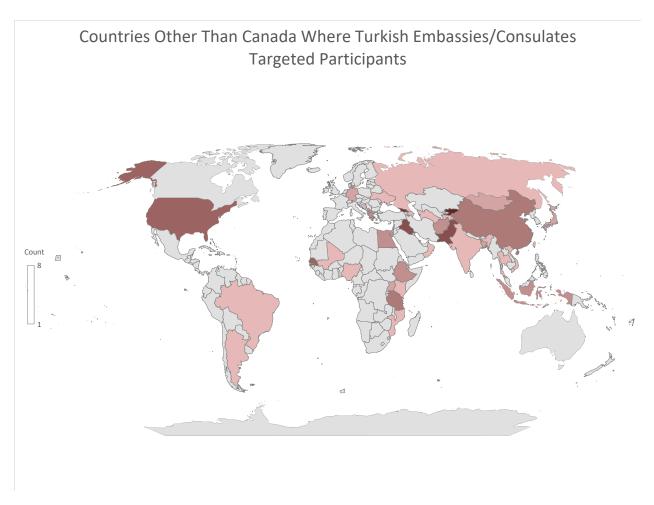
We also asked the participants whether and how frequently they were targeted by the Turkish Embassy or Consulates in **other countries** because of their affiliation with or support towards the Hizmet Movement. 40% of the participants reported that they were targeted at least once. Similar to their experienced in Canada, a substantial portion of the participants were targeted either frequently (11%) or very frequently (11%) by the Turkish Embassy or Consulates in the countries other than Canada.



#### **Mapping the Countries Where Participants were Targeted by Turkish Embassies/Consulates**

We asked participants in which other countries they were targeted by the Turkish Embassies or Consulates. The map below shows the distribution and frequencies of the countries mentioned by the participants as a response to this question. The most frequently mentioned countries were Kyrgyzstan (N = 8), Georgia (N = 7), Iraq (N = 6), Pakistan (N = 6), United States (N = 5), and Senegal (N = 5).

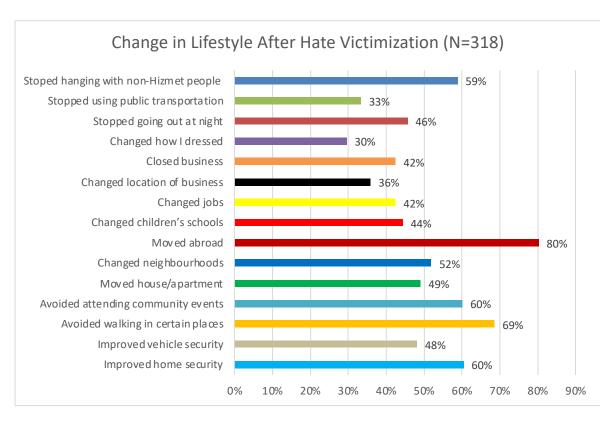




#### **Change in Lifestyles After Hate Crime Victimization**

We asked participants how they changed their lifestyles after the hate crime victimizations. The major changes in their life are moving abroad (80%), starting to avoid walking in certain places (69%), improving their home security (60%), starting to avoid attending community/cultural events (60%), stopping hanging with people from outside of the Hizmet Community (59%), changing neighbourhoods (52%), moving their house or apartment (49%), improving their vehicle security (48%), stopping going out at night (46%), changing children's schools (44%), changing jobs (42%), closing their business (42%), changing the location of their business (36%), stopping using public transportation (33%), and changing how they dressed (30%)





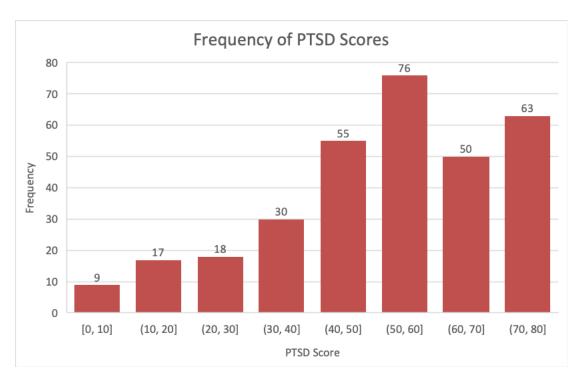
#### **Impacts of the "FETO" Label and the Corresponding Hate Crimes**

Using the PCL-5 scale<sup>1</sup>, we assessed the participants' scores in relation to the development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) resulting from their experience of being victims of hate crimes. The threshold score for diagnosing PTSD is 40 out of 80. A significant majority, 77% of the participants, exceeded this threshold, suggesting the presence of PTSD. The average PTSD score among the participants was 52.6. Additionally, 35% of the participants had a score higher than 60 out of 80, indicating a worrisome level of PTSD. The graph below shows the number of participants who scored at different levels on the PCL-5 scale.

\_

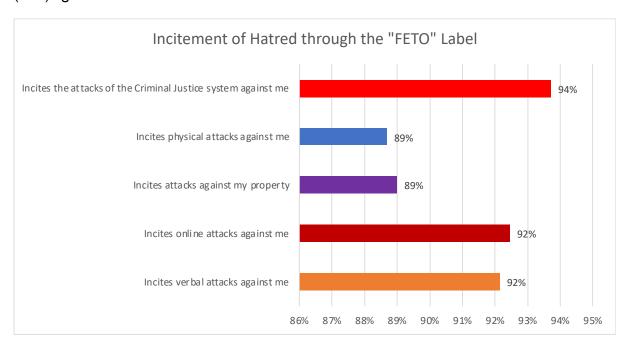
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The PCL-5 (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist for DSM-5) is a self-report measure for assessing the presence and severity of PTSD symptoms. It aligns with the DSM-5 criteria for PTSD. The PCL-5 consists of 20 items, each reflecting a symptom of PTSD. Individuals rate each symptom based on its severity or frequency in the past month. It is widely used for various purposes, including monitoring symptom changes over time, screening for PTSD, and aiding in provisional PTSD diagnoses. The PCL-5 is recognized for its validity and reliability in clinical settings and research, making it a valuable tool for mental health professionals and researchers in the field of trauma and stressor-related disorders.





#### **Incitement of Hatred through the "FETO" Label**

An important indicator of hate speech is whether a statement incites hatred towards the victim. Our participants reported that the widespread use of the "FETO" label incites attacks of the criminal justice system in Turkey against the Hizmet members (94%), physical attacks against (89%), attacks against their properties (89%), online attacks (92%), and verbal attacks (92%) against them.

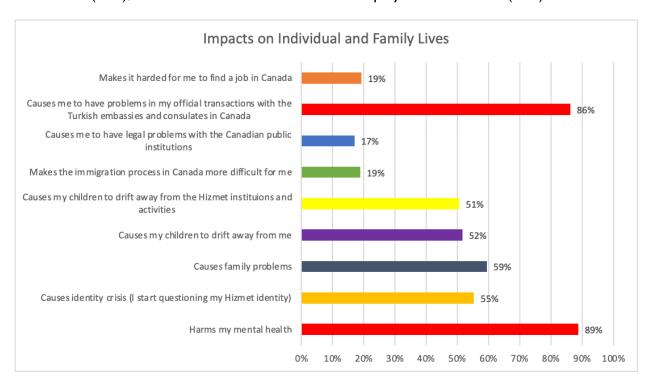




#### **Impacts of the "FETO" Label on Individual and Family Lives**

When asked about the effects of the widespread use of the "FETO" label on individuals and families, the majority of participants stated that it had a negative impact on their mental health (89%), caused them to question their Hizmet identity (55%), created family issues (59%), led to their children distancing themselves from them (52%), and caused their children to distance themselves from Hizmet institutions and activities (51%).

A majority of participants reported that the widespread use of the label resulted in difficulties in their transactions with Turkish embassies and consulates in Canada (86%). A smaller but significant number of participants reported that the use of the label made the immigration process in Canada more challenging (19%), led to legal problems with Canadian public institutions (17%), and made it more difficult to find employment in Canada (19%).



#### **Impacts of the "FETO" Label on the Hizmet Community**

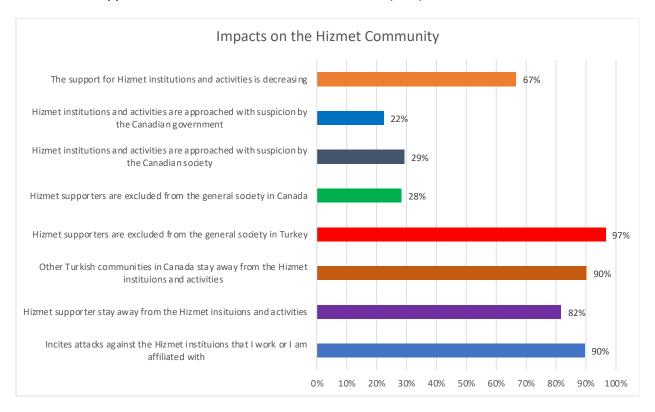
Participants further stated that the extensive utilization of the term "FETO" has a detrimental impact on their community. More specifically, it provokes assaults against the Hizmet establishments that they are employed at or associated with (90%). Additionally, Hizmet



supporters refrain from engaging with Hizmet institutions and activities due to this label (82%), and they face exclusion from Turkish society as a whole (97%).

The negative impacts at the community level extend beyond the borders of Turkey. A significant number of participants stated that due to the extensive use of the term "FETO," other Turkish communities in Canada distance themselves from Hizmet institutions and activities (90%). Additionally, an important portion of the participants think that Hizmet supporters are marginalized in Canadian society (28%), and both the Canadian society (29%) and government (22%) approach Hizmet institutions and activities with suspicion.

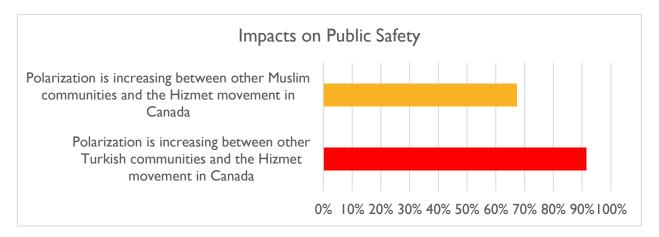
Overall, the majority of participants believe that the widespread use of the label has led to a decrease in support for Hizmet institutions and activities (67%).



#### **Impacts of the "FETO" Label on Public Safety**

The use of the "FETO" label has had detrimental effects on public safety in Canada, according to the majority of participants. One of the main concerns expressed is the growing polarization between Turkish communities and the Hizmet movement (92%) as well as between Muslim communities and the Hizmet movement (67%), which is attributed to the use of the "FETO" label.





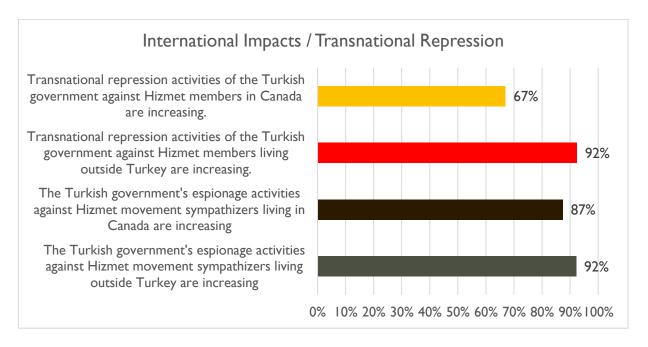
These numbers indicate that hate speech is more than offensive or hurtful; it is harmful to those who are targeted and to society at large. Hate speech tries to delegitimize and dehumanize the people who are targeted in the eyes of society. People who are victims of hate speech can often feel traumatized, excluded, unsafe, angry, or sad. It may make them so uncomfortable that they do not feel welcome in their communities.

#### **International Impacts / Transnational Repression**

The label also instigates the transnational repression activities of the Turkish Government against the Hizmet supporters. A significant number of participants (87%) expressed concern about the Turkish government's espionage activities targeting Hizmet movement sympathizers in Canada, as well as those residing outside of Turkey in general (92%).

Apart from the espionage activities, participants are worried about the alarming rise in transnational repression activities carried out by the Turkish government, such as kidnapping, surveillance, assaults, and threats, against Hizmet sympathizers in Canada (67%) and those living outside of Turkey (92%).





# **Legislative Context**

The hate speech legislation in Canada is primarily governed by sections 318 and 319 of the Criminal Code. These sections impose criminal sanctions against individuals who willfully promote hate against any identifiable group. The key aspects of this legislation include

**Section 318:** This section defines "advocating genocide" as a criminal offense. It includes calls for the killing of members of an identifiable group or inflicting conditions designed to destroy the group.

**Section 319(1):** This provision criminalizes the incitement of hatred against any identifiable group in any public place, which could potentially lead to a breach of the peace.

**Section 319(2):** It makes it an offense to willfully promote hatred against any identifiable group, except in private conversations.

**Defenses and Limitations:** The law provides defenses for statements that are true, in the public interest, or based on religious beliefs. Moreover, the accused must be proven to have intentionally promoted hatred for conviction under these sections.

**Balancing with Freedom of Expression:** Canadian hate speech laws seek a balance with the constitutional right to freedom of expression. The courts have played a crucial role in defining



the limits of what constitutes hate speech, ensuring that the regulations do not unduly infringe on free speech rights.

These legislative provisions are designed to protect identifiable groups from hate speech while maintaining a commitment to the freedom of expression.

## **Calls For Action**

Given the vulnerable situation of the Hizmet supporters in Canada, the ongoing persecution against the movement in Turkey by the Turkish government, and the transnational repression activities of the Turkish government that reached Canada, a comprehensive approach is needed to counter the devastating impacts of the "FETO" label and other corresponding hate crimes as shown in the research findings.

Although the Canadian legislation on hate speech seems to be sufficient to criminalize and punish the speeches that incite hatred or willfully promote hatred against an identifiable group, there has not been a known legal case opened in Canadian courts yet by the supporters of the Hizmet movement based on Section 319 of the Canadian Criminal Code.

It is well established that hate crimes are one of the most under-reported crimes. According to the latest General Social Survey, of the 223,000 hate crime incidents in Canada, only 22% of victims reported the incident to the police. The reasons for not reporting include a lack of confidence in the criminal justice system and police, the perception that the incident was too minor or not important enough, or that the incident was private or personal in nature. The hate speech and hate crime victimizations of the Hizmet supporters in Canada are not an exception to this general trend in lack of reporting to the police and other authorities. Therefore, a comprehensive approach with the involvement of all stakeholders is required to address the threat caused by the use of the "FETO" label.

# The roles of the Canadian federal government

We propose a motion to be moved at the Canadian federal parliament to officially recognize the serious threats posed by the widespread use of the "FETO" label as hate speech, marking a vital step towards addressing this issue comprehensively.

For an effective solution to the problem, the motion should:



- a. Call for a coordinated response involving Canadian federal, provincial, and municipal authorities to proactively tackle hate speech and hate crimes directed at Hizmet supporters and their institutions in Canada.
- b. Present research findings that demonstrate the severe effects of the "FETO" label and related hate crimes on the Hizmet community, as well as the broader implications for public safety in Canada.
- c. Urge the Turkish government to cease its cross-border repression activities in Canada and adhere to international human rights standards.
- d. Include a cautionary note to the Turkish embassy and consulates in Canada, reminding them of the potential risks their actions against Hizmet members pose, and stressing the importance of respecting diplomatic norms and regulations within Canadian jurisdiction.
- e. Extend an invitation through the motion to international organizations and human rights groups, encouraging them to recognize and address the threats associated with the use of the "FETO" label and related hate crimes.
- f. Call for a change in the legislation to ensure that the hate speech against the Hizmet movement is prosecuted and prevented.
- g. Support and sponsor the establishment of centres and services to provide legal, psychological, and social support to the Hizmet supporters to enhance their rehabilitation and integration.
- h. Eliminate the polarizing impacts of the label by supporting the events and programs that aim to enhance the dialogue and awareness among the Turkish and non-Turkish communities in Canada who were negatively affected by the hate propaganda of the Erdogan government against the Hizmet movement.
- i. Promote and support the research on the impacts of "FETO" hate speech and its implications for the transnational repression activities of foreign governments.
- j. Coordinate the federal, provincial and municipal efforts to prevent and prosecute hate crimes against the movement.

# The roles of the Canadian police forces

- a. Being aware of the multi-faceted threats caused by the use of "FETO" label and corresponding hate crimes,
- b. Training their members on the relevant potential cases that will come to their attention through reports from the victims,
- c. Establishing a database that will track and record the hate crimes against the Hizmet Movement, which will facilitate understanding the scope and types of hate crimes in Canada.



- d. Effectively investigating the allegations in coordination with the victims and the Hizmet community organizations
- e. Protecting the victims and the Hizmet community as a whole from further and more serious victimizations that might be caused by being labelled and discriminated.

# The roles of the Hizmet Community

- a. Reporting the hate speech and hate crimes against them immediately to the relevant hate crimes unit of the police in their jurisdiction.
- b. Raising awareness among their community regarding the importance of reporting these crimes to the hate crime units of the police in Canada.
- c. Providing seminars and training to law enforcement, schools, and other stakeholders to raise awareness about the movement.
- d. Creating training materials, pamphlets, booklets, and online materials to inform society about the movement and their victimization.
- e. Informing their members about the ways to report the crimes and being in contact with the hate crime units of the police in their area.
- f. Developing victim-support mechanisms to protect their members from the psychological and sociological negative impacts of the hate speech and hate crimes.
- g. Improving the resilience of the young generations in their communities through education and mentorship.
- h. Building partnerships with governmental and non-governmental institutions to initiate rehabilitation programs for their members at individual and family level.