

HATE SPEECH OF THE

ERDOGAN REGIME: "FETO(!)"





Hate Speech of The Erdogan Regime: "Fetö(!)" is the result of a need to analyse the discourse which has been adopted by the Turkish Government as part of a witch hunt it has been waging against the Gülen Movement. For nearly ten years, the Turkish government's discourse has been fuelling various hate crimes across the country as well as an unprecedented witch hunt. The political power who is behind the said discourse have, through the media and bureaucracy, has put all its efforts to communicate the said hate speech to the public at large. In order to able to spread the hate speech to the capillaries of the society, the government and its components have coded whatever negative content they could obtain and put them out in the public sphere. The current dynamics in Turkey and the eagerness on the part of the Erdogan Regime indicate that this discourse is likely to continue at least for some time. It is inevitable, however, that despite being repeated thousands of times, the words of hate will eventually lose their strength just like post-it notes peeling off of a wall.

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Introduction

Discourse may simply be defined as the use of the spoken and written language. Today, the concept of discourse has gone beyond its basic definition, and language, the main medium of communication, has turned into something beyond the communication of information to mean something which actually initiates action. Language may, as Noam Chomsky said "come with the person himself" or, as Michel Foucault suggested "change with every era". In any case, astonishing changes in communication technologies have increased the power of discourse, and verbal and written messages have started to trigger and steer social changes. Discourse, in Foucault's words, "has now spread everywhere and has taken everybody captive" and more interestingly, "it is not possible for even those who create a discourse to keep out of it". Discourse is one of the most significant realities of the 21st century.

Another quite serious issue of the last century is hate speech. Although it does not have a universally accepted definition, "hate speech" is nevertheless a term quite frequently used today. In broad terms, it can be defined as "language which expresses hatred towards a certain person or group based on characteristics such as race, gender, religion, language, nationality, political opinion, age, appearance, physical disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic class". There are laws created by national and international mechanisms on the prohibition or punishment of hate speech as well as judgments passed by national and international courts in that regard. The said laws and judgments usually consider expressions which may spread, incite, encourage or legitimize hatred hate speech.

Although its origins are widely disputed, the phrase "fetö(!)" as a discourse has been extensively used since 2014 and even more so following the 15th of July 2016. The Erdogan Regime has included the term "fetö(!)" in its "Political Islam Project" as hate speech and used it as the main fuel of the ongoing persecution which evolved into a "social genocide". The Gülen Movement had already been targeted by different governments in different times and it was being referred to derogatively as "F-Type", "Fetullahist Structure" or "Parallel Structure". When the corruption investigations of December 2013 exposed the extent of financial offences in which certain elements within the government were involved, the derogatory phrase of "Parallel Structure" served as a convenient smokescreen. The trap which was set up for the Gulen Movement with "the coup plot of July 2016" which Erdogan himself described as "a gift from Allah" provided the government with a new

opportunity to take its hate speech to a different level: Following 15th of July 2016, the phrase "FETÖ (!)" has turned into a most convenient tool for the government and its supporters.

This report titled "Erdogan Regime's Hate Speech: Fetö(!)" is the result of a methodological interdisciplinary study. Different disciplines such as the science of communication, political sciences, sociology and law have been utilised for a detailed analysis of this particular example of hate speech. On the other hand, given the significant role of the media which has been spreading hate speech within all layers of society, an analysis of the media as it functioned between 2016-2022 as a medium for hate speech has also been carried out. Open source intelligence has been gathered, classified and shared at "www.nefretsucu.com". In order to identify the phrase FETÖ(!) as hate speech, specific incidents have been classified based on recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The categories include "intolerance, respect for rights and dignity, incitement to hostility, discrimination, violence and incitement to genocide / incitement to commit crimes against humanity".

The eagerness of the government and its supporters to use the phrase FETÖ(!) shows no sign of subsiding after nearly 7 years. On the contrary, this discourse which is repeated as a "mental rumination" has turned into a tool which helped accelerate Turkey's departure from justice, democracy and the rule of law and it helped cover up crimes the people in the government have committed. It has become, just like Orwell's Goldstein, the most important weapon to persecute the opponents of the Erdogan Regime and in particular members of the Gülen Movement. Jürgen Habermas says in his "ethics of discourse", that where there are different parties which are seeking reconciliation on reasonable grounds, "the rules of discourse are accepted by merely participating in the discourse". The discourse of the regime, which this report seeks to deconstruct, has, however, been designed as a one-way, i.e., top-down communication model.

At a time when social unrest is getting more serious everyday and the tendency of individuals and groups to enter into some type of conflict is getting stronger, the sources and effects of hate speech are getting bigger. Today people are closer than ever to being the perpetrator and/or the target of hate speech, both individually or as part of a group. From that standpoint, the heart of the report is the presumption that the "Fetö(!)" discourse is indeed "hate speech". This report, "Erdogan Regime's Hate Speech: Fetö(!)", has therefore been prepared primarily to contribute to the fight against hate speech.

This report seeks to explain- through the basic communication process model-what the “source, distributor, vehicle and object” parts of the phrase “fetö(!)” as hate speech are, how the said discourse has evolved into hate crime and eventually into a full-blown witch hunt. The report in the First Chapter titled “The Source of Hate Speech: The Goernment”, seeks to explain the phrase “parallel structure” and the Government’s discourse strategy as two of the sources of the phrase “fetö(!)” as hate speech. The Second Chapter, “The Distributor of Hate Speech: The Media”, explains the way in which the discourse is spread through the media within the public. In the Third Chapter titled “The Vehicle for Hate Speech: Bureaucracy”, shows how all of the extremely politicised state institutions-the law enforcement and the judiciary in particular- extended the limits of their jurisdiction through the said discourse while getting utterly corrupt along the way. In the Fourth Chapter titled “The Buyers of Hate Speech: The Public”, the report analyses the impact of the discourse on the public at large.

The report may be read simply as a critical discourse analysis. Considering the detailed analysis of its blueprint and the way it has been implemented we hope that the report will help prevent the witch hunt which is primarily directed at the volunteers of the Gulen Movement but also targets all other opponents of the Turkish government. We pray that the plans and schemes of the Turkish government fail to spread hate speech any further as well as other hate crimes, and that we can unite in saying that there should be no room for such plans and schemes anywhere in the world.



Teacher Gökhan Açikkollu was killed after being tortured as part of the 15th of July Witch Hunt...



Esma Uludag crosses River Evros with her three children. She passed away shortly after after suffering a heart attack...

1 The Source of Hate Speech: the Government



The concept of power which falls within the area of interest of most social sciences, especially political sciences, law and sociology is a process or reality which we come across in both in our private and public lives and which is easier to experience than to define. On the other hand, Political Power is about processes such as the organising, development and the protection and may be defined to include coercive factors such as “legislation” as well as “power” and “force”. The discourse of the holders of the political power is a communications strategy based on “language” which may also be called “political discourse” which aims to persuade individuals or masses by way of verbal and non-verbal methods.

Political discourse is an important instrument for political power as those who hold power need discourse in order to continue to exist and control the public. Political discourse is the easiest way to realise political goals, as well as, depending on how developed the social order is, to connect a voter with his/her aspirations and ideals. According to Michel Foucault, power is a style of communication which one seeks to obtain through discourse. Discourse produces both knowledge and power, so language is the most important choice of political tool of the age. Perhaps, that is the reason behind constant repetition of the same slogan "we have walked these roads together" for nearly 20 years in order to "con the masses".

Hate speech serves as a convenient tool for those who hold the political power in countries with weaker democratic traditions. They use hate speech to first discredit and marginalise their opponents and then to alienate and demonise them. They also utilise hate speech to legitimise their unlawful practices, witch

hunts and even genocides. Hate speech serves as a very convenient option in legitimising, unlawful interventions, witch hunts and social genocides aimed at targeted persons or groups. It is, on the other hand, often possible to cover up one's own corruption with hateful political discourse and hold oneself out as a champion of democracy through rigged elections and lay the foundations of a fascist system.

Justice and Development Party (AKP) after winning the general elections in 2002 managed to increase the supports it got from voters through promises such as to follow an innovative, conciliatory and liberal path, facilitate reforms in the socio-economic field, advance relations with the European Union, and above all, adopt a conciliatory discourse in society. The said discourse of the government found buyers in different parts of the society, from Kurds to Alevis and from liberals to religious groups. The Gülen Movement, like some others, positioned itself among those who supported the AKP's efforts for democracy.

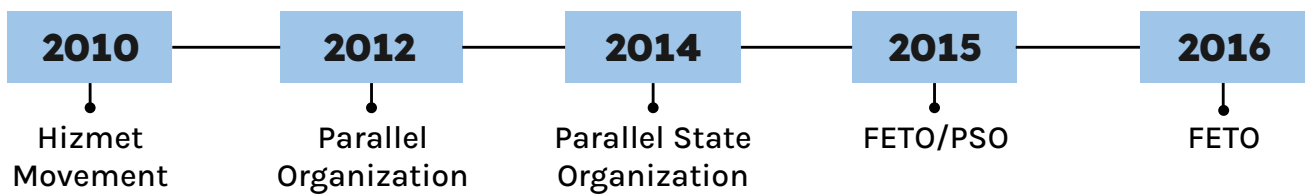
For the following 10 years, there existed a perception that certain things in the country would change for the better. The moment, however, the government believed that it finally possessed the political power absolutely, it put aside its conciliatory language, and switched into an aggressive political discourse in order to consolidate its own voter base. That politically aggressive discourse, which started with the Gezi Park protests, has in time become more organised in the form of “fetö(!) hate speech” and evolved to be the fuel of the pre-planned witch hunt against the Gülen Movement which the government had identified as its main target. Following the Gezi Park Protests, the holders of the political power abandoned its conciliatory language and adopted an aggressive strategy against its targets. All persons who did not offer their support to the Erdogan Regime had their fair share of labelling such as “terrorist, member of a terrorist organisation, terrorist organisation or traitors” as well as punishments regardless of their age, gender, profession or even wellbeing.



Gezi Park Protests (2013) scared the Erdogan Regime and caused it to adopt a more aggressive discourse...

After coming to power in 2002, Erdogan showed a special interest in working with individuals and groups close to the Gülen Movement. As part of its political discourse, the Erdogan Government chose to refer to the movement, rather sympathetically, as the “Hizmet (Service) Movement”. This however had gradually changed first into "Parallel Structure", then "Parallel State Structure" and finally, "Fetö/PDY". Since 2016, the phrase “fetö(!)” as hate speech has turned into the official political discourse of the Erdogan Regime and the main fuel of the witch- hunt. Erdogan's governments have therefore assumed the role of the source of hate speech, and hate messages have been distributed to the media, bureaucracy and the public from the same source.

The Political Discourse of the Erdogan Regime Against the Gulen Movement



The strategy of the government had started to adopt against the Gulen Movement became clearer following 17-25 December 2013 police operations. According to some, the government’s strategy actually came to light following the MIT investigation of February 2012 and also with Erdogan targeting schools associated with the Gulen Movement as well as Bank Asya which was also linked to the Movement. It is even possible to trace Erdogan’s plans back to a now infamous Security Council meeting back in 2004 or the 2007 “Dolmabahce Meeting” between Erdogan and the then chief of staff. It was only after the public referendum in 2010 Erdogan’s government actually switched into an openly aggressive political discourse against the Gulen Movement which they never “looked upon favourably” anyway. According to Erdogan and his party, “2010 Referendum was the turning point when they made everyone aware that AKP was now for the first time in absolute charge of the country and they would start making permanent changes and they would finally reveal their secret agenda”. Despite his famous speech in the night of his 2010 Referendum victory where he thanked “our friends across the ocean”, meaning Fethullah Gulen and his followers, or his speech at the 2012 Turkish Olympics organised by the Gulen Movement in which he called on Gulen to end the “yearning” and return to Turkey or his reply to a question as to whether he would be visiting Gulen during his state visit to the US in which he said “Is there anything that might pour down from the heavens which the earth could not accept?” he never refrained from using a discourse which hinted that he had already started to take steps to eliminate the Gulen Movement.



The Erdogan Regime has considered political discourse as the most important instrument for seizing and holding on to power, and has taken care to exploit the power of rhetoric to the fullest in order to consolidate the masses and eliminate opponents. For the same purpose, his regime has used political party congresses and rallies, “balcony speeches”, palace organisations, neighbourhood representative meetings, businessmen meetings, inaugurations, “first stone laying ceremonies” and international forums as the main means for hate speech. In order to spread hate against the Gülen Movement to the capillaries of the country, the holders of the political power coded themselves as the “source”, the media as the “distributor”, the bureaucracy as the “vehicle” and the public as the “object”. The political hate speech has thus initiated a process which led to social genocide.

2 The Distributor of Hate Speech: the Media



The Erdogan Regime, which held political power since 2002, set its sights on many structures, institutions and sectors, including the media and sought ways to influence all layers of society. The changes in the political system have directly affected the media just like many other institutions, and the failures of the system have caused the media to turn into a structurally corrupt sector focused on its ideological and economic interests. When the fact that the media has developed a direct relationship with the political institutions and transformed into an excessively politicised sector for ideological and economic reasons is coupled with the lack of merit, what is left of it is a mechanism which is no longer independent, which lacks the sense of responsibility awareness and which acts as the hitman for those who hold the political power.

The political climate in Turkey has evolved into a totalitarian regime after 2013, and the 15 July coup plot in 2016 destroyed the last of what was left of the efforts for democracy, paving the way for a political regime of one-man of absolute conviction. In such an environment, one of the regime's primary objectives has been to control the media sector. Having discovered the power of political discourse, the government, taking into account the Putin experience, realised that the media could play a key role in the transformation of society.

Those who held the political power started the process by transferring public funds to businessmen who were close to them, developed it with operations which they carried out through state organs (RTUK, TMSF), and eventually completely took over the media through the law enforcement and the judiciary. Having initially tried to control the media through individuals and groups acting on its behalf, established an institutional structure under the name of the Presidency of Communication in 2008 and sought to manipulate the public opinion on a 24/7 basis through a centre which functioned like a "ministry of propaganda". The regime, still not satisfied with the fact that it took the mass media under its control, tried to extend its control to the social media, which it saw as "a threat to democracy and a global security issue", and even planned to pull the plug on the Internet with its Disinformation Act.

One of the consequences of the 15 July coup plot is the process which gave way to the Presidential System which came into force in July 2018 and made it official that the government was now in the hands of a single man. As a result of such a one-man rule, there is now, on the one hand, a government in charge of the country which is "continuously developing, advancing, breaking free of its chains and gratuitously putting its unlimited natural resources and riches at the disposal of its people!" and on the other, an organisation called "FETÖ (!)" which, controlled by

foreign powers, is trying to stop that. At the same time, there exists a part of the public which firmly believes in the lies of the government, who is always ready for a good political confrontation no matter where, be it at school, marketplace or in a mosque. In such an environment, the government has rediscovered the surrounding effect of the media as a medium of hate speech and has used it most effectively.

From this point of view, the media, the regime's voluntary orderly, has become the disseminator of Hate Speech, carefully used concepts such as "fetö, fetö/pdy, fethullahist terrorist organisation, traitor, putschist, virus, Assassins, agent, puppet, servant of foreign powers", and committed countless offences which could be grouped under "intolerance, criminal defamation, incitement to hostility, discrimination, violence and incitement to genocide/crimes against humanity". Under the coordination of the Directorate of Communications, the media associated the targeted persons with terrorism, violence, radicalism and the coup attempt; intensified feelings of grudge, hatred and hostility towards the targets; put the blame of government's own failures on the Gülen Movement, thus portrayed them as criminals; singled out the Gülen Movement as the cause of every problem that the government have failed to tackle, especially those in socio-economic in nature; demonised the Gülen Movement and legitimised the witch hunt which was being waged against them.



3 The vehicle for Hate Speech: the Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy, in the simplest sense, is a community of state officials who are in contact with individuals. According to Max Weber, in modern bureaucracy all institutions rely on a bureaucratic organisation and as a result there has always been a close relationship and interaction between the holders of power and the bureaucracy. While bureaucratic bodies generally fulfilled their administrative duties according to the demands of political authority, they occasionally influenced it. Authoritarian regimes have, for the wellbeing of their political systems, preferred loyalty to merit, and sought to take bureaucracy under control with unusual regulations, appointments and assignments.

Just like many other developing countries it is possible to explain the relationship between the Turkish government and bureaucracy with “proximity”. Although conflicts do arise from time to time between the two, politics has become bureaucratised and bureaucracy has become politicised. In such circumstances, the merit system all but disappeared, political or controversial figures were appointed to high-level bureaucratic positions, heads of specialised institutions were appointed according to their political views. With that kind of approach, i.e., being loyal to the politicians is actually a good thing, the government managed to increase bureaucracy’s sense of loyalty, prevented possible bureaucratic resistance, monopolised the distribution of economic rent and found public officials whom the government could be able to blame for its own failures.





The Erdogan Regime which built its political discourse on a polarising language, tried to spread hate against target groups within all layers of society, from religious bodies to the police, from the judiciary to the army and from schools to hospitals. The political power, especially in the immediate aftermath of the coup plot of July 15, made an extraordinary effort to take the the phrase "fetö(!)" as hate speech to all capillaries of the society and bureaucratic bodies competed with each other to make that possible: Religious institutions, Security Forces, Gendarmerie, the Army, The Secret Services, Judiciary, Municipalities, Political Parties, Prisons and Detention centres, Health and Educational institutions, Foreign affairs, Social Security institutions all acted as distributors of hate speech.

One of the important distributors of hate speech in the bureaucracy is the Directorate of Religious Affairs. Through the famous calls to prayer in the night of July 15, its decisions as the sole authority in matters of religion, its efforts in the the "Organization of Islamic Cooperation", its overseas arm DITIB, weekly Friday prayer sermons, the Directorate of Religious Affairs has done whatever it possibly could to legitimise the acts of the regime and make the Gülen Movement the target of the witch hunt. DRA has quite consciously and willingly developed a discourse which included words of hate such as "infidel, hypocrite, seditious, nest of mischief, traitor, treasonous network, terrorist organisation" all directed at the Gulen Movement in its numerous events, fatwas and books. In fact, DRA has tried to spread its discourse both at home and abroad by adopting different strategies for each target group such as children, young people, the elderly, men, women etc. By doing so, it encouraged certain religious groups to issue fatwas such as "the property of Fetöists(!) were halal (permissible by religion) for the Muslims, and could forcibly taken away from them by the any member of the public with no religious consequences" and caused them to make plans to "terminate fetö".



President of the DRA in 2016 Extraordinary Conference of Religion:” FETO/PDY is movement which tears apart monotheism by interfaith dialogue”...



After July 15, loyalty replaced merit in law enforcement bodies, torture and ill-treatment crept back..

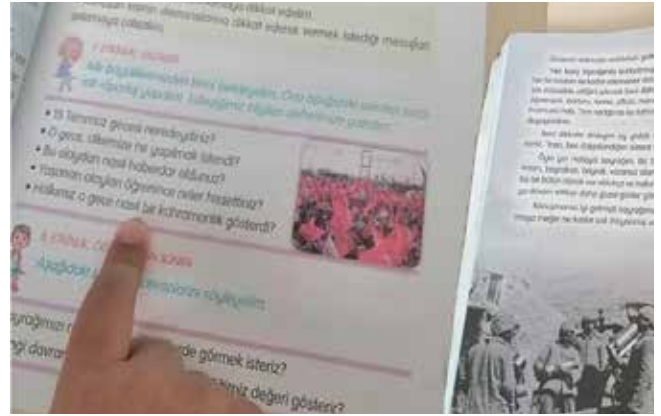
Other bureaucratic structures which have spent as much effort as the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs is the Police and Gendarmerie, Law Enforcement bodies, and the Army and Intelligence Agency, the security units. As law enforcement bodies whose main task is to ensure internal security has moved away from basic principles which they were bound with, such as the rule of law or respecting human rights, they turned into organisations which, on the one hand, committed crimes on behalf of the regime and on the other, with their unlawful acts, carved hate speech into the collective memory of the public and of course in the meantime the state archives. All such efforts, such as uniform indictments public prosecutors across the whole of the country were preparing for the members the Gulen Movement, black lists, coercions to confess, mass detentions , torture and ill-treatment, kidnappings and disappearances, footage of heavy handed police operations, misleading reports prepared for the domestic and foreign audience, manipulations aimed at abusing the international system, efforts to include the Gulen Movement in international terrorism lists, abuse of “effective remorse” laws, going from door to door to talk to their neighbours about them, carrying out

propaganda during national service, carrying out PR operations in national and international level, spreading hate speech amongst public.

Another bureaucratic structure that has been disseminating hate speech is the Turkish judiciary. Following 15th of July, the relationship between politicians and the judiciary, which was supposed to remain independent of the legislature and the executive, was on the lines of “law is the politicians’ dog”. The judiciary and the legal system as a whole have been drawn into the government’s hateful rhetoric. Thousands of pages of texts were prepared in readiness to go into indictments long before the 15th of July; arrests were meticulously planned and carried out together with the prosecution and the police; torture and ill-treatment were directly or indirectly encouraged and approved; judgments and orders were issued as and when instructed by the government; judges and prosecutors uttered words in court rooms which should never have been uttered, those who sought remedy in court were denied their most fundamental rights; those imprisoned and their families visiting them were subjected to discrimination and humiliation.



Some judges considered that the arrestation of a member of GM was the good deed of visiting the Holy Lands.



The government's hate speech has been included in the curriculum and started to be taught from the first grade.

The National Educational institutions are also worthy of mention as one of the bureaucratic institutions which spent significant efforts to spread hate speech in all layers of the society. Education is a systematic mechanism for new generations to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding for their adaptation to social life, and to improve them physically and spiritually. The National Education however especially in the aftermath of 15th of July has incorporated hate speech in the educational system. A "15 July Democracy and National Unity Day" was introduced together with new content in the curriculum starting from first grade, official events were organised under the same title, parents were also bombarded with the same propaganda, the Ministry of Education itself prepared written and visual materials for the public, special instructions were sent to all schools and special training programs were designed for the teaching staff to ultimately make them target students and their parents as the objects of the government propaganda. As a result, hate speech has become an integral part of the Turkish education system.

Municipalities and local offices of certain political parties have also been quite active in the spreading of hate speech against the

Gulen Movement. They saw their influence extend after AKP came to power and especially after the 15th of July. After the 15 July conspiracy, the state mechanism has largely fallen into the hands of the regime, and all areas of activity, from state administration to the provision of public services were controlled and supervised through a network consisting of the government, municipalities and political party representatives. Immediately after 15th of July municipalities and provincial party offices organised public rallies, abused their powers to unlawfully confiscate private institutions, and created "traitors' cemeteries". Such municipalities which were unlikely to support the government's agenda were seized by way of replacing elected mayors with appointed "trustees" under the pretext of "ensuring an effective fight against terrorism (!)".

Calls were made in official municipal publications or official social media accounts for a "total cleansing in order for an effective fight against FETÖ". Gulen Movement members were denied public services and in a particular incident, small children of a GulenMovement member who drowned in the Aegean Sea while fleeing the country with their parents were denied funeral services.



The biggest project of the Municipality of Istanbul, Turkey's largest, was to build a "Traitors' Cemetery" immediately after the 15th of July.



The treatment abroad of Ahmet Burhan, whose parents were victims of statutory decree, was prevented and he was not allowed to reunite with his father, who was in prison...

The Healthcare bureaucracy has also played an important role in legitimizing torture and ill-treatment of detainees by the police, the members of the secret service by destroying evidence of the aforementioned interventions, not attending to detainees who had fallen ill, not referring seriously ill detainees to hospitals and preventing the release of elderly and terminally ill high-profile prisoners. The torture of such people who the government specifically targeted for one reason or another were never recorded by doctors; they were denied treatment in prison or were not released from prison even when they became eligible for it for medical reasons. The reason behind that was; such people had already been highlighted as FETÖ(!) members in all official correspondence and anyone who might be considered acting leniently towards them would himself risk being arrested for aiding and abetting a terrorist organisation. Hate speech caused Turkish doctors to

abandon their Hippocratic oath.

There are, unfortunately, many more public institutions who have quite enthusiastically been carrying out hate speech. The **Foreign Ministry** which reduced the Turkish foreign affairs to undermining the Gulen Movement abroad, **TIKA, Maarif Foundation, Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, The Inquiry Commission on the State of Emergency Measures** which in order to mislead the public as to the devastating effect of the unlawful dismissals from public institutions, constantly manipulated the number of victims of the Emergency Law Decrees it decided to reinstate, the **Social Security Institution**, which has unlawfully tried to prevent the victims of persecution which had lost their jobs to work elsewhere, banks and other private institutions which willingly supported the social genocide are to name but a few.

4 The Buyers of Hate Speech: the Public



Public opinion refers to the common opinion held by the public on the public itself or any issue which concerns the public. The common opinion or decision about what the public thinks or makes may also be defined as public opinion. Since people live in groups, common judgements and decisions do have consequences which affect everyone. Public opinion, therefore, emerges as an important sphere and also a mechanism which any political power would want to control and manage, as the public opinion has a significant effect in the taking of appropriate decisions which would benefit the majority. On the other hand, public opinion may also turn into a control mechanism. It may be possible for individuals and groups who use public services to be part of the decision-making mechanism, to control and even prevent the mistakes of the government by expressing their concerns writing, orally or through meetings and demonstrations, especially in countries which enjoy democracy.

The Erdogan Regime has placed great significance to managing public opinion in order to legitimise its witch hunt of the Gulen Movement and to spread it within various social groups. To that end, the AKP has from the day it came to power conducted surveys on voter behaviour or voting preferences. It has, however, since 2010 increased its efforts in that regard and carried out quite detailed analyses as to “which message should be sent to whom, when, and by which means”. Another point AKP has been intensively looking at is how coercion and one’s personal interests could be used to increase the power of messages communicated to the target audience. The government not only uses the capacities of state institutions for such analyses and studies, but also benefits from the experience of components of the deep state.

The 15th of July has emerged as the outcome of all of such efforts and normalised the witch hunt and hate speech in the eyes of the public. The 15th of July has served as a litmus test for public opinion, and provided quite a few clues about the public response to the government's hate speech which it had been carrying out. To illustrate:

1. A mafia boss called on the government to "execute all the high-ranking soldiers who have attempted mutiny". An elderly woman attending a rally said on a national TV live broadcast "We are the hair in Erdoğan's a..". An elderly gentleman in a street interview remarked "If I catch Erdoğan on my mother, I would blame it on my mother". Another one when confronted by another member of the public said: "Look, I swear I'll call the police. Traitor!";



2. Bureaucrats, (police, lawyers, prosecutors, intelligence agents...) set up a "fetö(!) exchange" in order to extort money from the victims of the witch hunt with the promise of securing their acquittal from severe criminal punishment. A journalist effectively confessed when he said: "I took thousands of people's files to Suleyman Soylu, the State of Emergency Commission, and other authorities..., and it turned out that they were all victims of a slander". A politician claimed that a "fetö(!) exchange has been established and some fetö(!) members have been released in exchange for money". Another journalist claimed "A Fetö(!) exchange has been established in each and every province to save Fetö(!) members, and the cost of release is determined according to the person's profile and wealth";

- 3.** The president of the Turkish Bar Association who did nothing to stop the torturing of some of his fellow lawyers in police cells, animatedly clapped his hands with joy after Erdogan announced that “lawyers will also be given a green passport”. A politician broke the news that "804 people with grey passports who were sent abroad by different municipalities have decided not to return". The answer to that of one of the municipalities in question was; “people who would be a burden on the Republic of Turkey are leaving”;



- 4.** A professor of Islamic theology, widely known as the “fatwa consultant” of the Palace said; "It is permissible for people or the state to confiscate other people's property in case of need". The leader of a religious sect said to the crowds during a rally concerning the schools that the government unlawfully confiscated for being linked to the Gulen Movement: “Enjoy 15 universities, enjoy 1000 schools, enjoy, it is your right, it is a booty, it is a booty”. 19 Mayıs and Samsun Universities fought over the assets of Başarı University which had been confiscated by the government. Similarly, TÜRGEV and İlim Yayma, both with close links to Erdogan, fought over confiscated student dormitories. The Directorate of Religious Affairs also got involved in the struggle to get as many of those dormitories as possible;
- 5.** A lawyer acting for the TMSF, when asked by a philanthropist elderly lady who was well known for her charitable work during her eviction from her own house unlawfully confiscated by the government where she could possibly go now, said: "to an orphanage". The lawyer of the President when questioned about the source of the sudden increase in his wealth said; “it is our principle not to take legal action for the collection of attorney fees awarded to us”. The thieves who were caught robbing the house of a member of the Gulen Movement who live abroad said "That was fetö's property. They are halal (religiously permissible)". The Government unlawfully confiscated the assets of Boydak, Dumankaya, Akfel, Kaynak, Koza Ipek and Naksan, all privately owned holding companies.



6. A member of the opposition party said: "We have witnessed how FETÖists infiltrated into the Council of Higher Education and The Centre for Assessment, Selection and Placement and violated the rights of millions of students". Another one said: "the government consults us at every step...the process is proceeding completely on the basis of mutual compromise and reconciliation";
7. A university rector told a primary school student who said his name was "Fethullah" during Teachers Day celebrations. "Tell your father to change your name immediately" said the rector. During a rally a small boy was allowed on stage with Erdogan and called the head of the main opposition party a "traitor" while Erdogan and members laughed;



8. It is the government's hate speech which unites the artists and singers who make money in public funded shows and concerts; those who steal victims' assets by "freezing orders"; false heroes who claim to have stopped tanks on 15th of July by stuffing t-shirts into the exhaust pipes of tanks; the police chief who said when questioned about the weapons missing from the inventory of his force "The Fetöists stole them"; bureaucrats who acting like estate agents gifted the premises of Sifa University to the ruling party and Serhat College to the police; ordinary citizens who remain silent fearing that "something might also happen to them"; public officials who confuse merit with loyalty and the opposition which hides behind the "fetö" discourse at every opportunity and chooses to sit on its hands.

5 The Consequence of Hate Speech: Witch Hunt



Killing of women who were called witches...
 Source: www.liberaion.fr

Witch hunt is the punishment of people who were believed to be witches after a show trial or not being tried at all. It has a historical background and there have always been demonisation of targeted people by labelling them as “witches”. In the past, the targets of witch hunts were often women who were demonised and often falsely accused of being engaged in witchcraft and the punishment they received was usually either lynching or being burnt at stake. The Inquisition was similar in its practices. People who allegedly acted against the teaching of the Catholic Church were severely punished and those who could escape it had to live the rest of their lives in exile. From the beginning of the 20th century, the modern witch hunt evolved to target such people who were considered a threat to those who held power. During the Cold War, McCarthyism targeted “communists” as an example of modern witch hunt. Those targeted first lost their jobs and then prosecuted and sometimes imprisoned.

A witch hunt similar to what was carried out by the Inquisition and the US government emerged in Turkey after 15 July. As the Turkish government found hate speech which it had been carrying out for some time not enough for its unlawful purposes, it gradually moved onto a witch hunt to punish the members of the Gulen Movement.



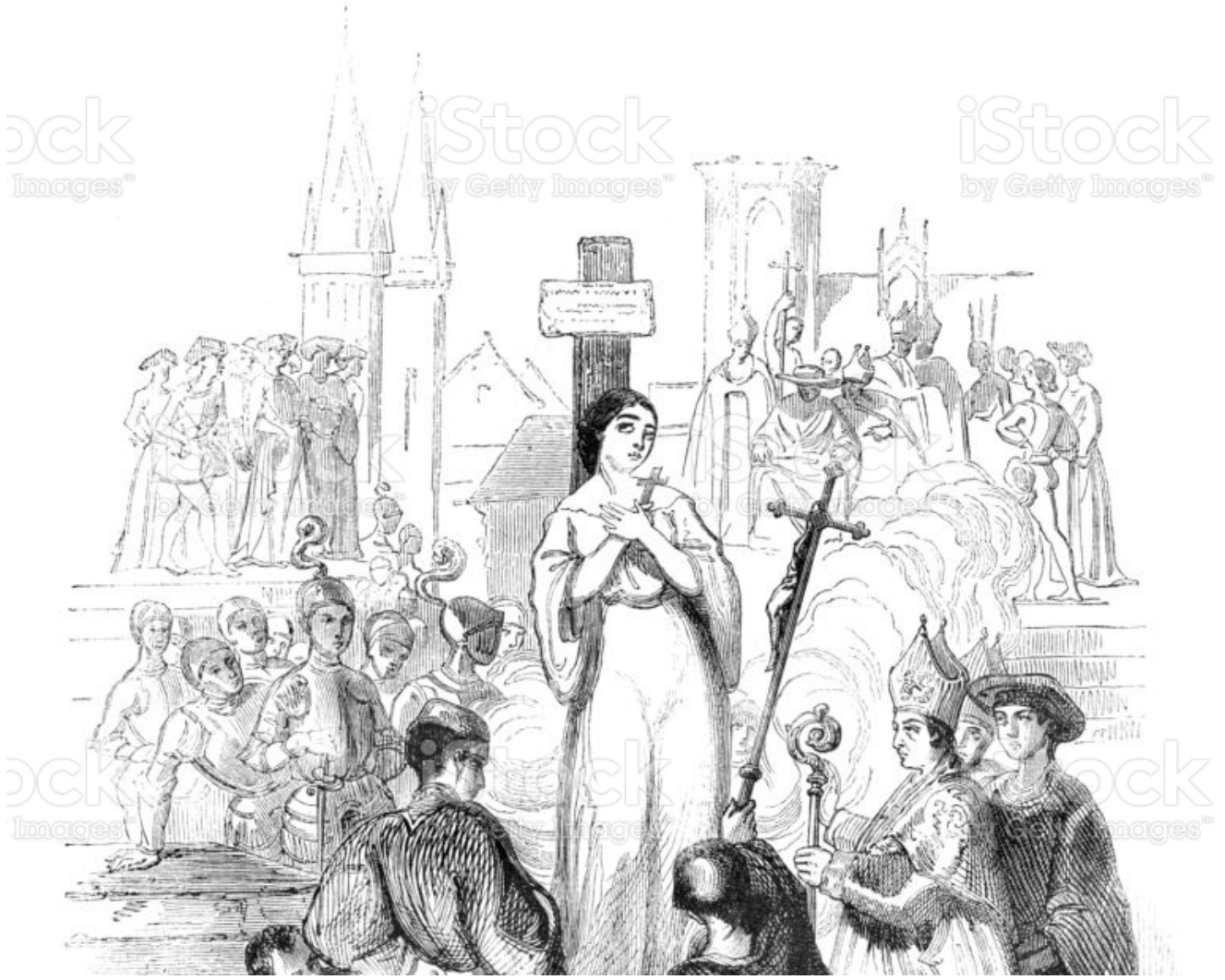
McCarthyism is the witch hunt for people targeted as communists in the USA between 1950-60...



Another result of the 15th of July Witch Hunt... Musatafa Kabakcioglu who was dismissed from his job by an emergency degree law was found dead sitting in a plastic chair...

This is a simple illustration as to how the system worked:

- 1.** A coded message would be given from the top of the government to the target group, titled “fetö(!)”, along the lines of “if you pity that treacherous gang ... the Assassins... the viruses..., you will become pitiful yourself”;
- 2.** The pro-media, which was the distributor of the discourse, acting on that message would create collective definitions such as “traitors... killers... scoundrels... dishonest... evil organisation... swamp” and specified how they should be dealt with, such as “there is no place for them... they will be eradicated... uninterrupted cleaning... the end that awaits them: the graveyard of traitors...” and would communicate it to the target public;
- 3.** This coded message, which came through the government and the media, would then be interpreted by the bureaucracy in accordance with their respective responsibilities. The Department of Religious Affairs would for example issued a fatwa of “an unreligious, hypocritical terrorist organization” while the law enforcement would interpret it as an instruction to “detain, torture and ill-treat, kidnap and disappear”. The judiciary into which in the aftermath of 15th of July thousands of inexperienced AKP members with Islamist and ultranationalist views have been appointed as judges and prosecutors would act on it as “head-hunters” and would order “arrests (of members of the Gulen Movement) which would attract the same divine reward as one visiting Mecca”. Healthcare staff would deal with “erasing the traces of torture and ill-treatment”, and the local governments would attend to the business of “building graveyards for traitors”;
- 4.** As a result, the public, manipulated by the government, media and the bureaucracy, would be ready to perpetrate hate crimes. The public opinion, motivated partly by government handouts, would have denounced, excluded, marginalised, demonised certain people targeted by the government and in the best-case scenario would have remained utterly indifferent to their suffering.



Burning of Jean D'Arc at stake. She became a symbol of witch hunts...=



Erdogan: "If you pity, you become pitiful"...



The 15th of July Plot... Symbol of witch hunt...

The process mentioned above is the summary of a metaphor that started with hate speech and turned into a hate crime, namely the witch hunt. This metaphor is a social genocide against innocents targeted by the political power.

Conclusion

Hate speech and hate crimes cause quite a lot of physical and psychological harm to its victims, and if turns into a witch hunt or social genocide, the extent of the physical and psychological harm becomes indescribable. If a government fails to achieve its goals despite the physical and mental harm it has caused, it will then try to destroy common sense. In that way, the government will be setting traps which will inevitably harm social cohesion. It will do so by abusing bureaucratic mechanisms and manipulating its sympathisers as well as certain radical elements within the society to harm its victims further. In such a society where seeking legal remedy is no longer an option, the victims will be left with no option but to leave their country. The Gülen Movement has had to suffer such a witch hunt which together with hate speech is now unfortunately a reality of Turkey.

The government has carried out its witch hunt with all its might and inexhaustible determination making use of all means available. The victims thought of nothing but to seek remedy within a legal system which was clearly indifferent to their persecution. They however did not for a second think about turning to crime, radicalism, violence or terrorism which would in any way be contrary to their principle as a group; "being handless to anyone who hits them and dumb to someone who swears at them". Some of them who could no longer bear persecution chose to leave the country. Erdogan Regime even after 5 years and countless victims continue to use hate speech to fuel its witch hunt.

It is true that there are certain obstacles in the fight against hate speech and hate crime in a democratic society, such as determining the prejudice on the part of the perpetrator or the degree of motivation that sort of prejudice causes. There are also varying opinions as to what weight hate as a motive should be given during sentencing or whether hate speech itself should be considered independently of the actual crime. That seems to be the case even where hate crime is punishable as a separate crime. What should not be open to discussion, however, is the fact that the perpetrator actually commits the crime with prejudice or hate directed at the victim and does so solely because the victim is a member of a specific group of people. Hate speech is what initiates such a process, and that is exactly what happened in Turkey.

To conclude; "fetö(!) as a phrase is hate speech". It is also a communication process. The source of hate speech is the government, the media is its distributor, the bureaucracy is its vehicle, and the public is its object. The government considered the Gülen Movement as an obstacle to building a new regime and conveyed its message to the target audience through "hate speech" by using symbols. The message in question was interpreted by the media and bureaucracy and communicated to the public. The public interpreted the message through their feelings, thoughts, attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and lifestyles and transformed them into response.

The extent of the witch hunt waged between 2015 and 2022 in numbers:

People who were prosecuted by the prosecutor's office	2.217.572
People against whom a decision was made to open a public lawsuit by the prosecutor's office	561,388
People who were sentenced by the courts	374,056
People who were sentenced to actual imprisonment by the courts	154.970
People expelled from public service by decree	129,410
Public servants dismissed by administrative decision	50,000
Judges/prosecutors dismissed by HSYK and HSK decisions	4.383
Academics expelled from universities	5,990
Lawyers detained:	+1.500
Journalists arrested	+300
Pregnant/baby mothers detained/arrested	302
Detained/arrested patients	157
Disabled people detained/arrested	44

Elderly detained/arrested	26
Lost their lives in prison	132
Lost their lives in law enforcement	8
Deaths in court	1
Died while fleeing the country	36
Those who committed suicide among those against whom action was taken	92
Average number of operations per day	3
Average number of detentions per day	57
Violations in prisons	9.232
People kept in solitary confinement in prisons	+3,000
Closed or confiscated associations	1410
Unions closed or confiscated	19
Federations closed or confiscated	19

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