

THE

THE HIZMET MOVEMENT
& ITS PERSPECTIVE ON
TURKEY'S CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Australian Perspective

SEPTEMBER 2014



THE AUSTRALIAN
UNIVERSAL
FEDERATION
of education & culture
an alliance in spirit

THE HIZMET MOVEMENT & ITS PERSPECTIVE ON

Hizmet

THE HIZMET MOVEMENT
& ITS PERSPECTIVE ON
TURKEY'S CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Australian Perspective

SEPTEMBER 2014

The Australian Universal Federation of Education and Culture is a not-for-profit organisation established on 20 August 2012 by the following founding members:

Selimiye Foundation Limited, VIC

Galaxy Foundation Limited (formerly operating as Feza Foundation Limited), NSW

Baris Education and Culture Foundation Limited, WA

Multicultural Youth Education Support Services Limited, SA

Queensland Education and Cultural Foundation Limited, QLD

Its main objective is to promote and protect the separate and collective interests of its members.

Prepared by
Ahmet Keskin, Fethullah Erdogan, Ahmet Orhan Polat, Halid Serdar Takimoglu

Edited by
Vicki Snowden, Jann Keegan

Designed by
Gokmen Saban Karci

© AUF. All rights reserved

Printed in Australia
September 2014



7 Speed St
Liverpool NSW 2170
Australia
+612 9822 4448
info@unifed.com.au
www.unifed.com.au

Table Of Contents

PREFACE	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	9
WHAT IS HIZMET MOVEMENT?	11
Historical Context	12
Multicultural Perspective	13
About Fethullah Gülen	13
Expansion	14
Funding	15
Hizmet Movement & Politics	15
Introduction of Hizmet in Australia	16
Hizmet Movement Institutions in Australia	17
HIZMET & AKP RELATIONS: PRE CORRUPTION SCANDAL	19
What is AKP?	20
2007 Presidential Elections	21
2010 Constitutional Referendum	21
Hizmet Supports AKP's Policies	22
The Rift Starts in 2010	23
Erdogan and AKP's Acknowledgement of the Hizmet Movement	26
HIZMET & AKP RELATIONS: POST CORRUPTION SCANDAL	27
17 December 2013 Corruption Scandal	28
Undermining the "Separation of Powers"	30
Controlling Media	31
Attacks on Hizmet Movement	32
Fuelling Ethnic Fire	36
A Short Lived Pledge	36
HIZMET'S STANCE	37
Criticisms of the AKP by the Hizmet Movement	38
After 17 December	38
The Resilience of the Movement	40
REFERENCES	42



**THE AUSTRALIAN
UNIVERSAL
FEDERATION**
of education & culture
an alliance in spirit

Preface

The Australian Universal Federation of Education and Culture (AUF) is a not-for-profit organisation established on 20 August 2012 with a main objective 'to promote and protect the separate and collective interests of its members' by the following organisations;

*Selimiye Foundation Limited, VIC
Galaxy Foundation Limited (formerly operating as Feza Foundation Limited), NSW
Baris Education and Culture Foundation Limited, WA
Multicultural Youth Education Support Services Limited, SA
Queensland Education and Cultural Foundation Limited, QLD*

As a non-government organisation, AUF is an element of a broader trans-national civic movement known as the Hizmet Movement, which aims to promote and uphold shared values in the local environment it operates in.

This document has been prepared to provide information about the Hizmet Movement and why it has been subject to ongoing attacks by the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP).

AUF wishes to thank the following people who kindly accepted AUF's offer to prepare this document in a very short time:

*Ahmet Keskin, Executive Director of Affinity Intercultural Society,
Fethullah Erdogan, Executive Director of Bluestar Intercultural Centre,
Ahmet Orhan Polat, Executive Director of Australian Intercultural Society*

This document was written with the Australian audience in mind and serves to address any questions they may have about the Hizmet Movement and current affairs in Turkey.

Information contained in this document is accurate as at 9 September 2014.

Hizmet



the Movement aims to address the ailments of society of ignorance, poverty and disunity

Executive Summary

This report was commissioned to provide information about the 'Hizmet', trans-national, civic movement, before expounding on the recent tensions in the Turkish political landscape, particularly the verbal onslaught by Turkish President Erdogan against the Hizmet Movement and its founder, Fethullah Gülen.

This report draws attention to the genesis of the Hizmet Movement in Turkey, its expansion across the globe, which involves 160 countries at the time of writing this report, and its activities in Australia. Essentially, the movement aims to address the ailments in society of ignorance, poverty and disunity.

This report also addresses why the Hizmet Movement supported the Justice and Development Party (AKP) during the early years, as the reforms were aligned with the Hizmet Movement's principles and social philosophy. These included the European Union (EU) style democratic reforms, promotion of human rights and equal opportunities to all citizens, including the minority groups. It also reports on the rift between the AKP and the Hizmet Movement, which began in 2010, straight after the Constitutional Referendum.

Following the graft probe on 17 December 2013, where several

government ministers and their sons were implicated in corruption, the AKP has been using its governmental powers to suppress and shut down Hizmet Movement-inspired organisations in Turkey and defame its founder, Fethullah Gülen.

Hizmet participants deem that President Erdogan is simply using a smokescreen to avoid fraud charges. Erdogan's public assault on the movement was largely seen as the government's attempt to deflect attention from and conceal the embarrassing corruption scandal.

Even though there is immense denigration, a public smear campaign and political coercion directed at the Hizmet Movement, the organisation's activities continue in Turkey and abroad.

This document was written for an Australian audience and was compiled using resources from the media and various texts, books and research papers that were trusted for their veracity.

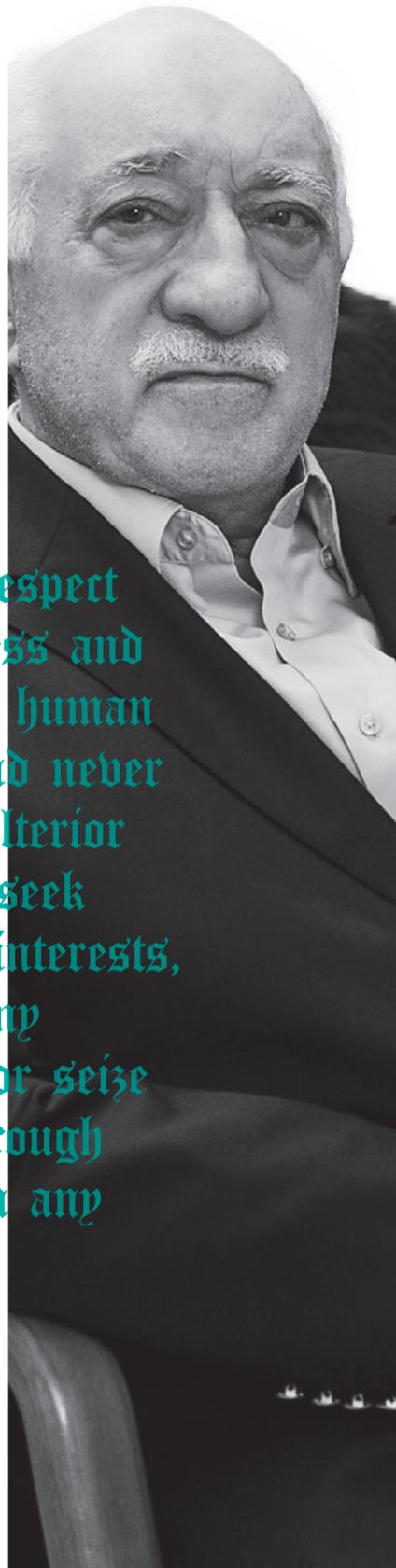


What Is Hizmet Movement?

'Hizmet' is a word in Turkish meaning 'service' or 'serving others'. The Hizmet Movement ('Hizmet' in short) is a transnational civil society initiative that broadly advocates for education and achievement for the ideals of human rights, equal opportunity, democracy, non-violence and the acceptance of religious and cultural diversity based on the fundamental principles of promoting mutual respect, seeking understanding and unconditional acceptance of the 'other'.

The main purpose and aim of the Hizmet Movement is to nurture respect for timeless and universal human values and never to have ulterior motives, seek material interests, impose any ideology or seize power through politics in any country¹.

nurture respect
for timeless and
universal human
values and never
to have ulterior
motives, seek
material interests,
impose any
ideology or seize
power through
politics in any
country



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Hizmet began in Turkey as a grassroots community in the 1970s within the context of social challenges faced at the time. These challenges included poor education levels of a largely religious population, violent conflict among ideologically and politically polarised youth, poor economic conditions and decades of a state-imposed ideology of discrimination where the unelected state bureaucracy infringed excessively into people's lives and imposed a particular lifestyle on the population.

In the early 1970s, Muslim scholar Fethullah Gülen and his supporters provided accommodation facilities for poor students. The core message of addressing the problems of Turkey primarily through education very quickly appealed to large numbers of youth and philanthropists who were looking for a way to make a difference without interfering in the chaotic political climate. Gülen and his colleagues called their small community 'Hizmet'. This word symbolised the core activity of serving people, society and humanity as well as the selfless ethic of being active in the world.

In the proceeding decades, Hizmet transformed from a grassroots community in the western regions of Turkey to the largest social movement throughout Turkey and one of the most significant transnational movements emerging from the Muslim world with presence around the world. A unique feature of the movement is that its participants and supporters come from all walks of life and from culturally, geographically, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds. Their work centres on three broad areas:

- Investing in education to nurture virtuous individuals
- Promoting philanthropy and community service for the disadvantaged
- Organising intercultural and interfaith dialogue initiatives to bring closer segments of society for harmonious coexistence

MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Although Hizmet and its philosophy is rooted in the Islamic tradition, it is not a mere faith-based organisation and its work is not necessarily of a religious nature. It is open to the participation of every person who shares its core values, regardless of their faith and ethnicity. One of the core ideals of Hizmet is not just an appreciation and acceptance of religious, cultural, social and political diversity, but the celebration of this diversity – Hizmet participants consider this diversity an inherent aspect of divine will for humanity. Hizmet participants believe such wholehearted acceptance is not contrary to one's devotion to religion, and respecting and embracing fellow humans at the level of our common humanity should be part and parcel of one's devotion.

ABOUT FETHULLAH GÜLEN

The Hizmet Movement started and gathered momentum from the vision articulated by Fethullah Gülen.

Fethullah Gülen was born in Erzurum, eastern Turkey, in 1941. Upon graduation from a private divinity school in Erzurum, he began to preach a message that included Muslims can be modern and religiously devout at the same time; there is no conflict between science and religion; and religious and secular segments of society could peacefully coexist if they accepted each other and engaged in dialogue. His fresh message, and social reform it promised and to some extent achieved, made him one of Turkey's most well-known and respected public figures. Gülen has reinterpreted aspects of Islamic tradition to meet the needs and challenges of contemporary Muslims and address the root problems facing the Muslim world.

Fethullah Gülen has built a reputation as a peace activist, public intellectual, prolific author and poet, influential



thinker and spiritual guide who has devoted his life to seeking the solutions for society's ills and spiritual needs.² He has inspired millions in Turkey and around the world. According to Steve Wright³, senior lecturer in the School of Applied Global Ethics, Leeds Metropolitan University UK, Fethullah Gülen is unusual in adding a distinctly Islamic voice to the calls for a non-violent approach to conflict resolution. Gülen was the first influential Muslim public figure and scholar to publicly condemn the 9/11 attacks (issued immediately after the tragedy) and express sympathy to the American people.

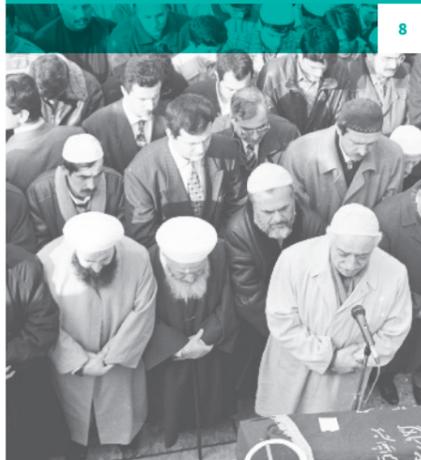
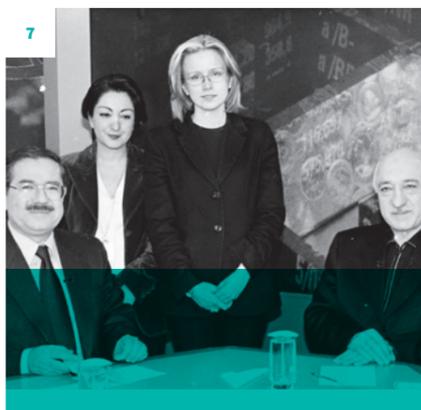
Hizmet participants are inspired by the ideas, life example and vision of Fethullah Gülen, who advocates for realising deeper spiritual devotion expressed in social work coupled with the understanding that serving fellow humans is equal to serving God.

Gülen focused on his important contribution as a public intellectual to the development of modern Islamic thought, working to integrate the devout faith of Muslims with liberal and democratic values, the rational sciences and an open market economy without violating the integrity of Islamic values and ethics.

Rather than engaging in political activism, Gülen has focused his efforts on mobilising fellow citizens around the cause of providing access to quality education, which in Turkey had previously only been available to wealthier students from urban centres. This has made him one of the best-known and respected figures in Turkey. By inspiring the establishment of scholarships programs, free tutoring centres, college preparation courses, schools and student hostels, Gülen and his supporters have facilitated disenfranchised poor and rural students' access to quality education, thereby helping transform the social landscape of Turkey.

Gülen's lifelong work in interfaith co-operation has earned him recognition from Christian and Jewish leaders in his homeland Turkey and a personal meeting with the late Pope John Paul II in 1997. He was also the recipient of New York-based East West Institute's 2011 peace award. His efforts have been praised by global leaders who recognise his vital role in fostering mutual understanding and peace as well as his leadership in humanitarian initiatives. In 2008, Gülen was ranked number one in Foreign Policy and Prospect magazine's joint poll of the 'Top 100 Public Intellectuals'.

Gülen currently lives in relative solitude at a retreat in Pennsylvania USA, where he continues to dedicate his time to scholarly study, teaching, writing, spiritual life and devotional worship as well as promoting a culture of peace and dialogue.¹



EXPANSION

In the last few decades, Hizmet participants have expanded their education activities across the world — from Central Asia to South Africa, from Australia to the Balkans— building schools, dormitories and tutoring centres; teaching college preparatory courses; establishing mentoring services for students; providing humanitarian aid to those in need; initiating dialogue and cultural centres; and facilitating business forums among many other service ventures. Today, Hizmet as a transnational movement has a presence in various forms in more than 160 countries around the world.

Schools

In their private, non-sectarian, non-denominational status, schools founded by Hizmet participants focus on science, arts and literature to broaden the perspective of students and enable them to appreciate the diversity of life, leading to a multicultural understanding and worldview. These schools are known for their academic rigour and have proven themselves on national and international stages.

In conflict-ridden regions of the Philippines, Macedonia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kenya and Bosnia, Hizmet schools have become bastions of inter-religious and interethnic harmony as well as providing much needed education to disadvantaged segments of society.

Dialogue

Professor Douglass Pratt from the School of Social and Political Inquiry at Monash University states "Gülen is a strong voice from within Islam seeking to proclaim the Muslim priority of peaceful and harmonious relations with the wider world, including with religious neighbours ... Fethullah Gülen arguably regards interfaith dialogue as an expression of a divinely-inspired love, for the primary theological verity that binds together all peoples of the Book -

Jews, Christians and Muslims especially - is the belief in God as Creator".⁴ In line with his revival of the Turkish tradition of dialogue, Gülen strongly advocates democracy, equal opportunity, science and non-violent responses to challenges faced in the modern world. One of the core tenets of his teachings is the celebration of religious, ethnic, cultural, social and political diversity. Gülen considers this diversity as part of divine will in the world and says, "you must have a seat for every person in your heart." The establishment of the Journalists and Writers Foundation in Turkey in 1994 has been the premier platform for leading intellectuals and thinkers to discuss solutions to the multitude of problems facing Turkey, the region and the world.

Women

Gülen has strongly advocated for the education of women and their social empowerment, a progressive view that stands in contrast to the views of more traditional Muslim leaders.

Relief Organisations

Hospitals built by Hizmet have provided affordable access to quality healthcare while volunteer doctors have brought free medical care to areas in desperate need. A major relief organisation within the Hizmet Movement, 'Kimse Yok Mu?' (Is There Anyone?), has mobilised thousands of volunteers and hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to disaster victims around the globe. Kimse Yok Mu? has consultative status as a non-governmental organisation of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.^{5 6}

FUNDING

Funds for the movement are provided by millions of donors from all over the world who are committed to the ideas and ideals promoted by Gülen and the movement. The movement's basic fundraising strategy consists

of establishing local circles of businessmen, educators, professionals, students and people from all walks of life who meet on a regular basis to discuss ways of implementing and funding the educational, humanitarian and social ideals of the movement in alignment with the principles and methodology exemplified by Gülen and to consider how they can be adapted to their local communities.⁷

Gülen is a strong voice from within Islam seeking to proclaim the Muslim priority of peaceful and harmonious relations with the wider world...

HIZMET MOVEMENT & POLITICS

The Hizmet Movement has never nurtured political aims, stances or programs. The movement has always been equidistant to all political parties, not favouring one over the other, even if there were attempts from parties to garner support for their political aspirations.

Hizmet has never urged its base to provide collective support to any political party. This is so the adherents of the Hizmet Movement can freely

express diverse political tendencies. In other words, the movement does not consider it appropriate to interfere with the political choices its adherents might make in elections.⁸

Based on these principles, Hizmet has the following approach to politics.

- It is impossible, both theoretically and in practical terms, for a movement of Hizmet's proportions, which consists of millions of volunteers from different political ideologies, to establish, either directly or indirectly, a political party or be affiliated with any political party.
- Nurturing no goal other than serving mankind, Hizmet recommends its volunteers, who are devoted to its mission and principles, clearly align their political choices as free individuals with the values of human rights, democracy, transparent and fair administration, pluralism, the rule of law, and freedom of faith and expression. Choice in supporting any political party in public debate and elections should be based on their track record in upholding these values rather than unconditional allegiance to a political party.

On the other hand, it is legitimate and beneficial to society for any individual to engage in active politics should they choose to do so. Therefore, it is quite natural for any individual who is inspired by the movement's intellectual and cultural views and values to make a personal decision to pursue a political career. Hizmet's principle of "not establishing any party and not being affiliated with any political party" should not be confused with an individual's personal preferences to engage in active politics.⁹

INTRODUCTION OF HIZMET IN AUSTRALIA

The Hizmet Movement was first introduced to Australia in the early 1990s with the arrival of some volunteers from Turkey in Sydney and Melbourne. The volunteers were predominantly post-graduate students studying and helping the Turkish community with some of their programs. The first programs envisaged by the volunteers were to establish a youth dormitory in Melbourne and provide informal tutoring assistance in Sydney.

In 1992, Fethullah Gülen visited Melbourne for the foundation laying ceremony for the youth dormitory in Broadmeadows, Victoria. He gave sermons at mosques in Melbourne and Sydney where he emphasised the need to establish education services and the requirement for greater engagement with society. During his visit to Australia and after listening to his sermons, Gülen's views began to resonate with local residents and the movement was gradually established in Australia. It was supported by the local Turkish community, primarily by businessmen, workers, university students and housewives among others. The volunteers established non-profit foundations as vehicles for the establishment of tutorial centres, youth hostels and student homes before initiating school projects. Selimiye Foundation was established in 1992 in Melbourne, followed by Feza Foundation (now Galaxy Foundation) in 1994 in Sydney. During these years, the concept of establishing schools gathered momentum. The volunteers established a K-6 primary school and later a high school. In 1996, Sule College (now Amity College) opened in Sydney, followed by Isik College (now Sirius College) in Melbourne the following year. When the Turkish communities in the other capital cities heard about these school projects, they too felt the need to establish schools in their localities.

During the early days, the non-profit foundations were also instrumental in providing services for the community:

- Scholarships to students in Australia
- Assistance with humanitarian aid for local and international natural disasters

- Mentoring in ethical values for the youth and educating them to refrain from bad habits.

Over time, newer organisations have been established to facilitate these offerings and other services.



...the concept of establishing schools gathered momentum. The volunteers established a K-6 primary school and later a high school. In 1996, Sule College (now Amity College) opened in Sydney



HIZMET MOVEMENT INSTITUTIONS IN AUSTRALIA

Educational

There are 15 schools inspired by the movement across five capital cities with over 4,700 students in Australia ranging from K-12. They are independent and non-denominational schools offering values-based education for students from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds. Each school follows the state's education curriculum and offers extra-curricular activities as part of their student development programs. Students at these schools have participated in international competitions and various programs with other schools in their respective states. The schools have rallied to provide aid to emergency relief causes whether local, national or international, and at times, have taken their students to famine stricken areas to deliver relief first hand.

Dialogue

Dialogue centres have been established in major capital cities with a view of promoting social harmony and fostering mutual respect, understanding and acceptance of the other. Affinity Intercultural Foundation and the Australian Intercultural Society were established prior to the events of 9/11. Following the tragic events of 9/11, at a critical time, these organisations in particular have been instrumental in promoting positive dialogue and interfaith awareness by facilitating social interactions with people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Every major capital city currently has a dialogue organisation serving its local community.

As a result of inaugurating the very first mosque open days, Ramadhan iftar dinners, study tours to Turkey, the 'Home Encounters' program and the like, the Hizmet Movement's dialogue activities have received widespread acclaim and applause. The notion of engagement with others, which is at the core of dialogue, has seen prosperous relationships develop between the

dialogue organisations and a wide range of grassroots organisers, including politicians, public servants, media, academia, intellectuals, community and religious leaders.

The dialogue centres and their initiatives were also instrumental in establishing the Gülen Chair for Islamic Studies at the Australian Catholic University and forming the Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation Islamic studies courses with Charles Sturt University.

Social Welfare

The Australian Relief Organisation, a national relief organisation, was established to assist with local and international (natural or man-made) disasters in the form of providing aid, such as food, clothing, shelter and infrastructure projects; for example, the establishment of wells and health screening. Helping fellow human beings regardless of their ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds is a core principle of the Hizmet Movement.

In its short period of existence, the movement has raised funds for local incidents, such as the Queensland floods and the Victorian and New South Wales bushfires, scholarships and clothing appeals, and have provided food packages for Burma, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and Papua New Guinea among others. They have mobilised health professionals to offer free eye, dental and general health screening in countries such as Papua New Guinea.

Business Community

A national Business Chamber of Commerce was established to promote opportunities with other business communities in Australia and around the globe. To date, the chamber has generated business trips to Turkey and South-east Asia, attempting to stimulate new markets for Australian businesses. The chamber has also hosted business delegations from various countries and regions including Turkey, Central Asia and South-east Asia.

Media

The Zaman Australia newspaper, a subsidiary of the Zaman newspaper brand (the largest circulating newspaper in Turkey with around a million copies sold daily) has weekly publications in Turkish, which are distributed to all major capital cities. There have been periodic English editions on various themes, such as ANZAC Day and Australia Day.

For further information about the Hizmet Movement the following web page can be visited

hizmetnews.com
gulenmovement.us
fgulen.com/en

Cultural Centres

Fethullah Gülen, the spiritual advocate for peace, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, has stressed the importance of positive perception and understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim populations.¹⁰ He is a strong advocate for co-existence, social harmony and communities collaborating to serve a goal greater than themselves. This requires deep understanding of each other – their background, culture and aspirations in life. Consequently, cultural centres have been established as a platform for the exchange of different cultural traditions and learning centres for multicultural societies.

In Australia, there are cultural centres promoting awareness of the riches of

the Anatolian heartland, which is not confined to the Turkish culture, but also Kurdish, Assyrian, Armenian and Greek cultures among others. There have been festivals showcasing this cultural richness in various forms: dance, arts and food to name a few.

There have also been events promoting the shared legacy with Australia, the ANZAC story. To provide an all-rounded understanding of the Gallipoli campaign, the cultural centres have organised conferences and hosted photo exhibitions presenting the Turkish and Australian perspectives on the Gallipoli story.

The cultural centres are currently operating in Sydney and Melbourne and are open to engage in dialogue with other cultural groups without exclusion.

Hizmet & Akp Relations: Pre Corruption Scandal

Although the AKP was a relatively new party, it won enough seats in the November 2002 parliamentary elections to earn an absolute majority in the 550-seat Turkish parliament.

Hizmet

WHAT IS AKP?

The Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP or AK Party) came to power in Turkey in the general elections of 2002.

The success of the AKP in the early 2000s can be traced to inroads made in the 1990s by the Welfare Party (WP) (Refah Partisi), an Islamist party founded in 1983 by Necmettin Erbakan. The WP won the majority in the 1995 parliamentary elections and became the first Islamist party ever to win a general election in Turkey. In January 1998, however, the WP was banned by Turkey's Constitutional Court on charges of disturbing the secular order. A number of its members joined another Islamist party, the newly formed Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi), but in June 2001 it was also banned.

In August 2001, a group led by Abdullah Gul and Recep Tayyip Erdogan (former mayor of Istanbul, 1994–98) formed the AK Party ('ak' in Turkish has the meaning 'white' or 'clean') as a democratic, conservative political movement. Unlike its predecessors, the AKP did not centre its image on an Islamist identity and paradigm. The leadership openly accentuated it was not an Islamist party and emphasised its focus was the democratisation not politicisation of religion. Nevertheless, the political roots of the AKP and its leadership, and some of the party's political endeavours, meant the AKP was viewed with suspicion by the secular segments of the Turkish population.

19

In spite of the party's democratic position and drawing significant support from non-secular Turks, it faced objections from some segments of Turkish society that it harboured an Islamist agenda that could undermine Turkey's secular foundation.

Although the AKP was a relatively new party, it won enough seats in the November 2002 parliamentary elections to earn an absolute majority in the 550-seat Turkish parliament. Although Erdogan was legally barred from serving in parliament or as prime minister because of a 1998 conviction for inciting religious hatred—he had recited a poem that compared mosques to barracks, minarets to bayonets and the faithful to an army—a constitutional amendment passed in December 2002 effectively removing Erdogan's disqualification. After he won a by-election on 9 March 2003, Erdogan was asked by President Ahmet Necdet Sezer to form a new government, and on 14 May 2003, Erdogan took office as Prime Minister. At the AKP's first general assembly, held in October of that year, members unanimously re-elected Erdogan as the party's chairman. In 2004, the AKP was broadly successful in local council elections.

21

2007 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Tensions that had been simmering between Turkey's secularist parties and the AKP were at all-time high in 2007 when attempts by the parliament to elect Abdullah Gul to the country's presidency were blocked by an opposition boycott. In response to the subsequent stalemate, early general elections were held in July of that year and yielded an overwhelming victory for the AKP. Gul was subsequently put forth as a candidate for president again and on 28 August 2007 he was elected by parliament to the office of presidency.¹¹

After the opposition parties deadlocked the 2007 presidential election, the ruling AKP proposed a constitutional reform package. The reforms consisted of:

- Electing the president by popular vote instead of by parliament
- Reducing the presidential term from seven years to five
- Allowing the president to stand for re-election for a second term
- Holding general elections every four years instead of five
- Reducing the quorum of lawmakers needed for parliamentary decisions from 367 to 184.

The reform package was first vetoed by incumbent President Sezer. He then filed to the Turkish Constitutional Court about the reform package, because presidents are unable to veto amendments for a second time. The court did not find any legal barriers in the package and 69% of the voters supported the constitutional changes in the subsequent referendum in 2007.¹²

2010 CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM

Reforming the constitution was one of the main pledges of the AKP during the 2007 election campaign. The main opposition party CHP (Republican People's Party) was not interested in a large scale alteration of the constitution, making it impossible to form a constitutional commission. The amendments lacked the two-thirds parliament majority needed to instantly become law, but secured 336 votes in the 550 seat parliament – enough to put the proposals to a referendum. The reform package included:

- The right for individuals to appeal to the highest court
- The creation of the ombudsman's office
- The possibility to negotiate a nationwide enterprise agreement
- The ability of civilian courts to convict members of the military who are suspected of having committed crimes during military coups
- The right for civil servants to go on strike, a privacy law and improved changes to the structure of the Constitutional Court.

The referendum passed with a majority of 58%.¹³



20

HIZMET SUPPORTS AKP'S POLICIES

When the AKP came to power in 2002, Turkey was under intense pressure from the military tutelary regime. The AKP promised it would promote democratic values, greater ethnic reconciliation and a pluralistic approach to government relations with the society, improve rights and freedoms, provide a significant social agenda and also amend the constitution created by the 1980 coup to make it more civilian friendly.

These were Turkey's fundamental needs to progress. In the final analysis, the AKP took significant steps from 2002 to 2010 to democratise the higher judiciary as well as achieving significant success in the fight against the military tutelary regime by amending 26 articles of the constitution through the referendum held in 2010, throwing its support behind the Ergenekon and Sledgehammer (Balyoz) trials led by the judiciary, and introducing comprehensive reforms in just about all aspects of life.

Demilitarisation of Power

Naturally, as a key civil society movement in Turkey, Hizmet gave its full support to the demilitarisation of Turkish politics. In particular the Ergenekon and Sledgehammer cases received support from Hizmet-related media. Both cases ended in the conviction of ex-army personnel and civilians linked to coup plots against the AKP government. Even though European Union criticized the way the trials were conducted; especially the long detention times and possibility of some low-ranking officers being charged unjustly, the decisions of the Turkish courts were applauded by the EU as positive steps toward democratisation and prevention of military intervention into politics.

Turkish people voted to shape their constitution without fear of reprisals by a military junta

2010 Referendum

For the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic, Turkish citizens voted to shape their constitution without fear of reprisals by a military junta. Gülen and Hizmet participants saw this as a historic opportunity to strengthen the rule of democracy. In his support of the AKP for the 2010 constitutional referendum, Gülen said, "I wish we had a chance to raise the dead from their graves and urge them to cast 'yes' votes in the referendum," highlighting the importance of voting in favour of the changes.¹³

The Hizmet Movement supported the policies of Erdogan and his government because they furthered democracy, the rule of law, human rights, equality, EU accession, and respect and freedom for diversity and pluralism, principles and values the movement has always advocated. Policies that strengthened civil society, removed non-democratic tutelage, provided greater freedom to religious minorities and sought to resolve Turkey's long-standing internal and external problems need solutions and the party deserved support on the grounds of service to the people of Turkey, rather than politics.

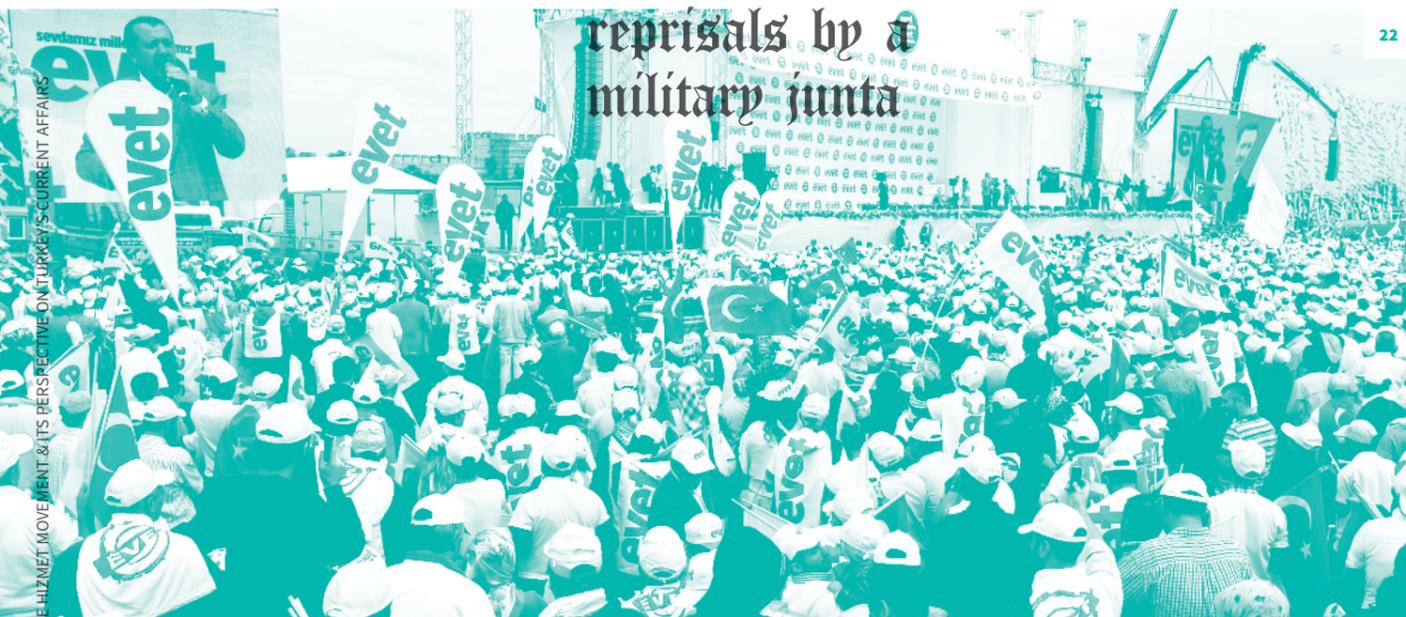
THE RIFT STARTS IN 2010

After reducing the influence of the military tutelary regime to a large extent and gaining total control of the state apparatus, the AKP started to falter and slow down the democratisation process, after their 2011 election victory following the 2010 referendum success. Serious problems began to emerge in terms of human rights and freedoms. During this period, the Hizmet Movement's support started to decline because the party no longer sought to achieve its previous principles and values.

Erdogan and the AKP adopted an increasingly authoritarian style of governance. Rather than reforming constitutional bodies and structures that are deeply undemocratic, they controlled too much power over an elected government. He and his close circle sought to maintain power and govern through them. He strengthened state power at the expense of civil society and was openly inclined towards governance models in countries of the Shanghai Cooperation rather than the EU. Furthermore, he increasingly displayed signs of readopting the "political Islam" he had rejected when founding the AKP.

AKP's 2011 election manifesto prominently featured a new, civilian-based constitution; however, the half-hearted efforts to draft the new constitution were abandoned after it became clear the inclusion of a powerful office of executive presidency was not feasible. Ironically, the government operated under a constitution drafted by the 1980 military junta while the junta members faced civilian courts.¹⁴

Some examples from 2010 to today demonstrating this change of direction included the grinding halt to the EU negotiations; the cover-up of the Uludere incident (a Turkish military airstrike in which scores of Kurdish civilians were killed); the hard-line rhetoric developed during the Gezi Park protests deeply polarising Turkish society; the attempt to ban preparatory colleges (similar to tutoring centres in Australia) without giving adequate reasons; and restricting freedom of speech by castigating journalists (Turkey has the highest number of journalists in prison in the world).



Mavi Marmara Campaign

From its inception, the Hizmet Movement has always refrained from violence and promoted positive action in full compliance with the law. Participants of the Hizmet Movement have never approved of conflict. They have suggested that problems can be solved through dialogue and conciliation, and built their philosophy on this perspective.

A key event that signalled a change in AKP's policies came with the Mavi Marmara incident - the Israeli attack on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla in May 2010. It was a praiseworthy effort to take humanitarian aid to the poverty-stricken people of Gaza. However, this campaign created a tense and risky climate, and some AKP deputies who were planning to join the expedition abandoned the ship at the last minute.

The campaign ended in tragic events. Nine Turkish citizens died because of the violent intervention by Israel in international waters. Although this incident strained Turkish-Israeli relations, the Turkish and Israeli governments maintained contact to overcome the crisis, and eventually, after the intervention of US President

Barack Obama, Israel made an apology to Turkey. However, the issue of how to compensate for the losses and casualties is still being debated by the two countries.

At the time of the incident, Gülen expressed his condolences, referring to the dead as "martyrs". Gülen said humanitarian aid should have been taken to Gaza without triggering any conflict and this problem should be solved through diplomatic means without confrontation and causing international conflict. However, when Gülen voiced his views, his words were distorted and he was misquoted by the pro-AKP media to give the impression he was suggesting Israel's authority should be accepted. In reality, Gülen suggested that whatever authority was given to Israel by the United Nations should be respected, since it is the international law. For a long time, particular networks within the state sought to discredit the Hizmet Movement in the eyes of the public by using this incident.⁹

Ironically, in August 2014 Prime Minister Erdogan¹⁵ and Energy Minister Taner Yıldız¹⁶ announced they had requested permission from officials in Israel in an attempt to help the people in Gaza.

Gezi Protests

Gülen has criticised the Turkish government for a police crackdown on protesters during the 2013 Gezi Park demonstrations in which a number of civilian protestors were killed and many injured.

The Gezi Park protests started in May 2013 as a peaceful demonstration to prevent the construction of a shopping mall in Istanbul's central Taksim Square and turned into massive protests across the country that resulted in a heavy-handed police crackdown. As a result of the government's decision to use excessive force, several people were killed and thousands injured.¹⁷

"The people voiced democratic demands [during the Gezi Park protests] and, initially, there were innocent protests. These protests could have been tolerated. Officials could have visited the protesters and learned about their demands. Instead, Erdogan and his close circle turned a blind eye to the protesters' demands and the protests were violently suppressed. Is the shopping center that was to be built there worth a single drop of blood?" said Gülen in his first remarks about the Gezi

Park protests in the fourth part of an interview with daily Zaman newspaper.¹⁸

"Naturally, pressure led to violence and a local issue turned into a national security issue. And the evil networks which were waiting for an opportunity to stir up chaos stepped onto the stage, and we were very concerned at that time," Gülen said when denying claims his movement masterminded the protests.

Gülen urged the importance of toleration and diversity in the society saying, "We must refrain from treating our differing ideologies and diverse identities as reasons to quarrel or engage in conflict. Everyone must respect diversity. Freedom of speech and expression cannot be restricted. While the views of the majority certainly deserve respect, the views of minority groups should be treated with the same level of respect as well. If you suppress the masses, this will cause friction along social fault lines. And this is such a big risk that no political party can [do that] for whatever political gain". He added that the government failed to adopt such a view during the Gezi Park protests.¹⁹

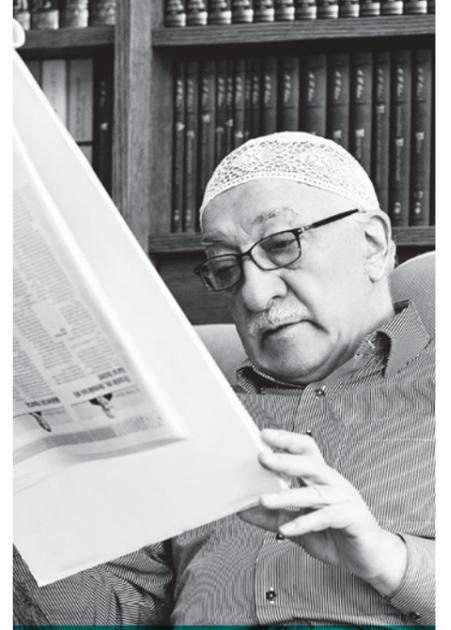
Plans to Abolish Preparatory Colleges

Private preparatory colleges supplement regular schooling by helping secondary and tertiary students succeed in standardised high school and university admissions tests. They are institutions similar to tutoring centres in Australia, but are much more popular. Preparatory colleges are regarded as performing an important social function in levelling the income disparity between schools and regions by providing educational opportunities for low income sectors of Turkish society.

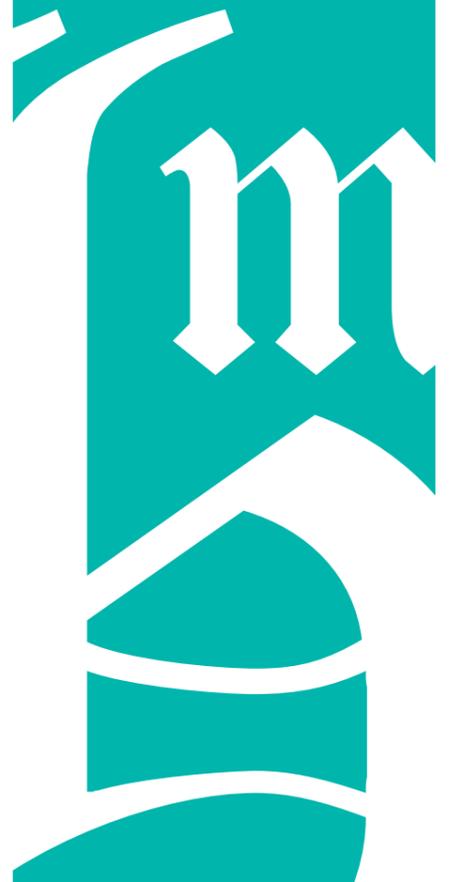
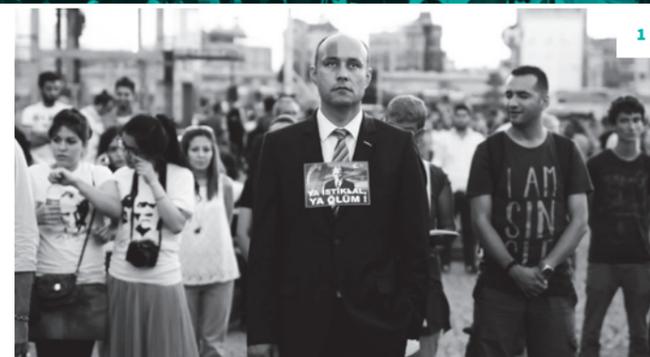
In November 2013, Erdogan announced plans to close down or transform these colleges, without giving any satisfactory reasons. His plan seemed to be part of a bid to reduce the Hizmet Movement's influence in education as the movement owns a significant portion of those schools (an estimated 20%) and would lose an important outreach and service opportunity to serve the youth. In addition, the movement would receive a significant blow to its income generated through these institutions.²⁰

Many people, ranging from opposition party officials, legal experts to concerned parents, raised serious concerns about the proposed plan. Even some members of the European Parliament criticised the government's unilateral action to curb free enterprise. Furthermore, legal experts argued the government's decision was in violation of the free enterprise clause of the Turkish Constitution.²¹

Many believe that, instead of being a problem, the preparatory colleges are a solution for the current test-based education system. While the overall education system is in crisis and faces major reforms almost annually, preparatory colleges should be the last to be transformed.



"We must refrain from treating our differing ideologies and diverse identities as reasons to quarrel or engage in conflict. Everyone must respect diversity..."



ERDOGAN AND AKP'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HIZMET MOVEMENT

In the 12 years prior to the 17 December 2013 corruption probe, Erdogan, his ministers and members of the parliament and AKP mayors not only participated in many of the Hizmet Movement organisations, but also acknowledged the work of Gülen and his followers publicly in various platforms.

Erdogan attended at the closing ceremony of Turkish Olympiads on 16 June 2013 and addressed a crowd of more than one hundred thousand. In his address, he praised the organisers and thousands of Turkish teachers, and also hailed the Hizmet Movement for its contribution to world peace.²³

The general public was unable to comprehend the sudden change in Erdogan and the AKP's approach to the Hizmet Movement.



“ During the 28 February [1997 coup] period, great smear campaigns were made against him [Fethullah Gülen]. Thank God that he was acquitted of all allegations and cleared of all slanders. At that time, to distance himself from these troubles as well as the atmosphere of Turkey, he went to the US. And in my visit (to him in the US) the Prime Minister [Erdogan] sent his regards and asked if Hocaefendi [Fethullah Gülen] had any requests, directions for us” – Bulent Arinc, Deputy Prime Minister, in August 2013.²³



“ Fethullah Gulen is a valuable national asset. You might like him or not but he is a decent person. He is a scholar. Everything about him is in the open, transparent, and under the audit and scrutiny of the government. ...it is unacceptable to label innocent people as members of a gang” – Bekir Bozdag, then Justice Minister, in 2013.²²



“ The [Gülen] Movement has leaked into the government - crows would laugh at this! ...we have lived with this paranoia for a long time. That ‘the Movement has leaked into the government and is trying to overthrow the government’ – Huseyin Celik, Deputy of Head of AKP and Government speaker, in 2013.²³

Hizmet & Akp Relations: Post Corruption Scandal

Not long ago, while the Arab Spring was toppling governments, Turkey was considered a model of constitutional democracy in the Middle East. For this reason, President Obama chose Turkey as his first majority-Muslim destination. But this 90-year old democracy is facing a major crisis¹⁵. Four corruption investigations that touched the sons of three ministers and the Prime Minister have sparked massive government reaction, led to the collapse of the rule of law and significantly undermined the foundations of Turkish democracy.²⁴

muftulugu.gov.t

17 DECEMBER 2013 CORRUPTION SCANDAL

Here is how events unfolded in the largest corruption case Turkey has ever seen.²⁵

Initial Investigation; 17 Dec 2013:

- On 17 December 2013, on the orders of the Chief Public Prosecutor of Istanbul, Turan Colakkadı, Turkish police rounded up over 50 suspects involved in three investigations concerning corruption, bribery and money laundering charges after 14 months of investigation. Of the 91 people detained 24 were formally charged and remanded in custody by the courts.
- Those charged included the sons of the interior minister, the economy minister and the minister for urban planning and development; Reza Zarrab, an Iranian-Azeri businessman; Mustafa Demir, the AKP-affiliated mayor of İstanbul's Fatih district; Ali Agaoglu, businessman and construction mogul; Suleyman Aslan, general manager of Halkbank (a state owned bank); and a number of other prominent people.
- During the raids following the detentions, police found 4.5 million USD in cash stuffed into shoeboxes and approximately 10 million Turkish Liras (about 5 million USD) also in cash in a bookshelf in the Halkbank's General Manager Aslan's house. In addition, police found a substantive amount of cash and seven steel vaults in the house of one of the minister's sons.
- On 25 December 2013, the three cabinet ministers whose sons were linked to the investigation resigned from their offices.
- On the same day, Prime Minister Erdogan announced a cabinet reshuffle effectively ousting the fourth minister linked to the investigations from his post.



2nd Investigation; 25 Dec 2013;

- On 25 December 2013, the public became aware of another investigation led by State Prosecutor Muammer Akkas when the head of the Istanbul Metropolitan Police Force refused to carry out the orders of the prosecutor (following the arrests on 17 December, the government changed the head of the Istanbul Metropolitan Police Force and reassigned important police managers to outside Istanbul).
- Despite a court order on 25 December, 41 new suspects were not detained for questioning and search orders were not executed at seven premises.
- Instead, on 26 December, Prosecutor Akkas was removed from his position and reassigned.
- Since then, Akkas has issued a short statement to the effect that his orders were not followed, he was prevented from carrying out an investigation, the independence of the judiciary had been violated and the constitution had been breached.

Government's Initial Reactions

In the face of systemic corruption allegations and mounting evidence, the strategy chosen by the AKP appeared to be to subjugate the judiciary to political control, and hence stifle current corruption investigations and block future ones.

As was the case during the protests of Istanbul's Gezi Park, Erdogan and the AKP government argued that these investigations were an international plot to overthrow the government orchestrated by "external" and "internal" enemies that were deeply

uncomfortable with a strong and independent Turkey. In the process, Erdogan and the AKP directly and indirectly referred to:

- The United States – Erdogan even implicated the US ambassador to Turkey as being the mastermind behind the investigation, adding that he did not have to keep the ambassador on Turkish soil
- Israel - 'the [bank] interest lobby'
- Foreign powers not wanting Turkey to resolve its Kurdish issue - 'the blood lobby'
- The Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (TUSIAD) - 'the big industries'
- The opposition political parties
- Gezi Park protestors
- The Hizmet Movement - the domestic pawn carrying out these plots on behalf of the above domestic and overseas parties.

The government tried to stop the corruption investigation and subsequent information leaks by resorting to controversial measures that subdued the judiciary, controlled the media, expanded the powers of Turkey's intelligence agency and limited the public's access to the internet and social media, including YouTube and Twitter.²⁶

- The government removed Istanbul's police chief and replaced him with a bureaucrat with no relevant policing experience.
- It pacified the prosecutor, discredited him with a media smear campaign and then removed him from the case.

- Efkan Ala who is not a member of the parliament but the undersecretary for the Prime Ministry, was appointed as the Interior Minister.
- The interior ministry removed thousands of police investigators from their posts and compelled the replacing investigators to inform their politically appointed superiors of any future investigations.
- Then Justice Minister, Sadullah Ergin, and Istanbul Chief Prosecutor Colakkadı met twice following the detentions and while the investigations were ongoing.
- An important by-law was passed stating the police are obliged to inform their superior officers of ongoing investigations carried out on behalf of the public prosecution services. This meant, for example, the Interior Minister would be informed by the police if their son or daughter was being investigated by the police on behalf of the prosecution.
- The media's access to the police was also restricted. Online media coverage of legal investigations was threatened with a bill that placed websites, blogs and social media under political censorship.²⁷

Alleged Tapes

Before the local elections at the end of March 2014, Turkey was shaken by alleged recordings of telephone conversations between Prime Minister Erdogan and media bosses, the arrangement of public tenders and bribery as well as interference in the judicial process.

The most notorious appeared on YouTube on 24 February 2014: recordings of five telephone conversations alleged to be between Erdogan and his son, Bilal Erdogan. The conversations were said to have taken place on 17 December 2013 (the day the corruption probe started) and 18 December.²⁸ In the recordings, Erdogan expressed concern that his home was going to be raided and discussed with Bilal how to get rid of large amounts of cash kept there.

Although Erdogan claimed the recordings were fake and a ploy by the Hizmet Movement, he did not vehemently deny the allegations. Instead, he deflected blame onto officials working at the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK), allegedly accused them of handing over the encryption key for his and his son's phone to police authorities, who then tapped the phones.²⁹

Independent institutions and specialists on the matter claim it is impossible for the tape recordings to have been fabricated.³⁰ Later, Erdogan confirmed he made a call to a media executive and the Minister of Justice.³¹ He openly admitted that he and his family's private conversations were being listened to.

Initial Public Reaction to Corruption Scandal

Under normal circumstances, the 58% of Turkish population who supported the democratic constitutional amendments of 2010 would punish these developments at the ballot box. In a poll conducted right after the corruption scandal, face-to-face with 1,545 adults by MetroPOLL Strategic and Social Research Centre³², 60% of those surveyed agreed the prosecutors were right to proceed with the corruption investigations, versus only 26.5% who did not. Of those surveyed, 90% said they would not support the ruling party if its leaders turned a blind eye to corruption.¹⁵

Hizmet Movement – the "Scapegoat"

The timing of the raids combined with the supposedly growing affiliation of members of the police with the Hizmet Movement made the investigation appear as though it was conducted in retaliation to Erdogan's plan to abolish private preparatory schools. However, Erdogan had not provided any evidence to prove his claim. The movement denied the accusation.

In an attempt to justify this blatant assault on the independence of the judiciary and other authoritarian measures, the Hizmet Movement was used as a scapegoat.¹⁵

Targeting Gülen's sympathisers was not just convenient, it was also strategic. Media elements affiliated with the Hizmet Movement spoke directly to AKP's voter base and, unlike the civil society groups that the AKP managed to endear through various mechanisms, the Hizmet Movement maintained its independence. Therefore, there was nothing to stop Hizmet participants from presenting inconvenient truths about the AKP's leadership.¹⁵

Hizmet participants believed Erdogan and the AKP attacked the Hizmet Movement for the following main reasons:

- The Hizmet-affiliated media speaks to the AKP voter base and they refused complete obedience.
- Hizmet-inspired civil servants, bureaucrats, officers, policemen, etc., refuse to turn a blind eye to the government improprieties that conflict with their core values; hence, they present a threat.
- Hizmet participants cannot be coerced into providing unconditional support for the AKP by threat or the incentive of favouritism because they do not have any material expectations from the government.

It can also be added that Hizmet participants are unwilling to support an all-powerful presidency that lacks proper checks and balances. As former AKP Tourism and Culture Minister Ertugrul Gunay stated, "the main reason Erdogan attacks Hizmet is Hizmet thinks universally but Erdogan thinks and acts locally, like many other Middle Eastern politicians"³³

UNDERMINING THE “SEPARATION OF POWERS”

It is a well-known that Erdogan had issues with the judiciary during his 12 years in power. He openly expressed his somewhat “worrying” views on how the judiciary was not working in line with the government. Lambasting the separation of legislature, executive and judiciary powers as ‘the main obstacle’ in Turkey, in December 2012 he said, “the division holds the government back in its bid for launching further services”.³⁴

The AKP already had tight control of both the executive and legislative branches. The opposition parties were unable to pass legislation, oppose the AKP’s legislation or start a parliamentary investigation against any member of the executive branch. Since the corruption investigations, there has been a full-scale effort to tame the judiciary as well. The AKP geared up to pass legislation that would dramatically increase the powers of the Justice Minister in the HSYK Supreme Council of Judges and Prosecutors, which would empower the Justice Minister to approve or reject investigations by members of the judiciary³⁵. This legislation would completely remove the independence of the judiciary and bring it under political control. The legislation received strong criticism from the European Union.

Efforts to Control the Judiciary

In February 2014, the AKP passed a law to shift the power balance in the HSYK, Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors, by giving the government critical power over the appointment of prosecutors and judges, and their assignment to investigations and court cases.³⁶



Threatening the Prosecutors

AKP advisers and parliamentarians have issued tweets and other forms of messages threatening the prosecutors involved in corruption investigations with serious consequences.³⁷ A prosecutor in the city of Izmir who was pursuing a graft probe involving a relative of the AKP’s mayoral candidate declared he was threatened by the Undersecretary of the Justice Ministry to halt the investigation or “face the consequences.”³⁴

Redesigning Government Agencies

The AKP felt it was necessary to cleanse the public service of all members who are sympathetic to the Hizmet Movement by profiling, demoting, re-assigning or firing government employers. This was evident when nearly 500 police chiefs or senior ranking officers were re-assigned to lower ranked duties in eastern parts of Turkey.

The judiciary was re-shuffled with similar outcomes. Various prosecutors were demoted and re-assigned to work on cases that were outside the jurisdiction of their usual work. This was evident when the Chief Prosecutor, who was pursuing the graft probe, was subject to slanderous accusations that defamed his character and integrity. The slander was being led by pro-AKP media outlets with various columnists trying to manufacture evidence against the Chief Prosecutor.



Creation of Super Peace Judges

Erdogan claimed the corruption probe was orchestrated by the Hizmet Movement to overthrow his government. However, he did not provide any evidence to prove his claim. The judicial mechanism in place was unable to find any wrongdoings and no official was accused or charged. A new “judicial mechanism” was needed.

In mid-July 2014, a new judicial package was passed to create “super peace judges” with far reaching powers. A single peace judge would have the unilateral power to start and end investigations and to issue all types of orders, such as detentions, searches, arrests and the freezing of assets. Previously, these decisions could only be made by a court comprising a panel of judges as opposed to a single judge (Turkey does not have a jury system). The new peace judges would be appointed by the compromised HSYK, Supreme Council of Judges and Prosecutors.

On 22 July 2014, just one day after the new super peace judges and courts started to operate, police officials who had previously investigated the graft operation were detained in raids. As part of the government’s attempt to contain the corruption scandal, as many as 100 high-ranking members of the police force were detained in a large-scale operations that began late Monday night and early Tuesday morning in over 20 provinces. Politicians criticised the violation of basic legal requirements

during the investigation into ex-counter-terrorism unit police chiefs, describing the operation as politically motivated.³⁸

On 1 September 2014, 33 policemen were detained as part of an operation against those who were involved in the corruption probe in 2013. In addition, they had investigated Iranian businessman Reza Zarrab, among other corruption suspects.³⁹

All this undermined the basic democratic tenet of the separation of powers.

CONTROLLING MEDIA

Never in Turkish history has a single person or party achieved such a high level of media subservience. Today, the AKP leadership controls a very large segment of the Turkish media through a ‘carrot and stick’ approach. Several media groups receive preferential treatment in exchange for AKP-friendly editorial policies. Some of these media organisations were acquired by AKP-friendly businesses through questionable funds and processes.⁴⁰ The opposition CHP leader raised the question in the Turkish parliament of whether the Prime Minister was personally involved in the transfer of the Sabah media group to a government friendly business.¹⁵

On the other hand, media who is unfriendly to the AKP is threatened with intimidation, financial inspections and fines. These media group owners faced similar threats to their other businesses. Columnists have been fired for criticising the AKP leadership, some of whom publicly described the ongoing events as owner-censorship.⁴¹

The AKP’s use of financial inspections to punish those companies and businessmen who may dissent and disagree with the AKP government is not new. It imposed a fine of 850 million USD on the publisher Dogan Yayin Holding in 2007, after which the company’s newspapers and magazines had to tone



down the volume of their criticism. Similarly, the Finance Ministry’s inspectors raided the substantial energy companies of Koc Holding after Erdogan openly lashed out at the company accusing it of being one of the plotters and instigators of the Gezi Park protests.

New Internet Law

A controversial law on the regulation of internet news portals and websites was proposed by the AKP government and accepted by Parliament on 5 March 2014, leading to concerns over internet freedom and people’s right to access information. According to the changes, the Transportation Maritime Affairs and Communications minister would be able to block websites without first obtaining a court order. In addition, the head of TIB, the Telecommunications Directorate, would be authorised to block access to web pages on his own initiative in the event there is a request concerning the violation of the right to privacy.⁴²

Ban on Twitter and YouTube

On 21 March 2014, Twitter was banned and, on 28 March, YouTube was blocked in Turkey.⁴³ Erdogan also threatened to ban Facebook, accusing social media users of abusing these platforms for a “smear campaign” against his government in the lead up to local elections.⁴⁴

The disruption sparked a virtual uproar with many comparing Turkey to Iran

and North Korea where social media platforms are tightly controlled.⁴⁵ Štefan Fule, EU commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, said in a statement: “The ban on the social platform Twitter in Turkey raises grave concerns and casts doubt on Turkey’s stated commitment to European values and standards”.⁴⁶

Today, the AKP leadership controls a very large segment of the Turkish media through a ‘carrot and stick’ approach

The ban on Twitter was lifted 2 weeks later⁴⁷ and the YouTube block lifted two months later.⁴⁸

Journalists Fired

One of the major victims of the government’s authoritarian policies after the Corruption Scandal was journalists. According to statistics provided by the Press Industry Workers’ Union (Basin Is), 981 journalists and reporters were fired and 56 journalists were forced to resign in the first six months of 2014.⁴⁹

After the presidential elections on 10 August 2014, the AKP extended its pressure on the media to one of the largest media groups in the country, the Dogan Media Group. Daily Hurriyet Editor-in-Chief Enis Berberoglu’s resignation on 8 August 2014 was followed by that of the critical columnist, Yilmaz Ozdil, who parted ways with the newspaper on 15 August 2014 after Hürriyet censored his column on corruption. Also, a writer for the same media group’s Radikal, Fatih Yagmur, who ran stories on trucks that had been stopped en route to Syria, was fired on the same day.⁵⁰

ATTACKS ON HIZMET MOVEMENT

Hate Speech

Since 17 December 2013, news items slandering the movement have become a daily routine for the pro-AKP aligned Turkish press.

At times, the movement has been depicted as a puppet of “international actors” citing the movement’s public dialogue initiatives as evidence. Columnists have claimed that a variety of entities - the Vatican, the United States, the European Union, Israel, Jewish lobbies, neo-cons, international Zionism, Syria, ISIS, MOSSAD, MI5, the CIA, the FBI, the Moon Cult, the Freemasons, the Rockefeller family and the Sephardi chief rabbis of Israel - are either employers or partners of the Hizmet Movement.

In Erdogan’s public speeches, members of the movement were described as ‘evil’, ‘sneaky’, ‘tape editors’, ‘companions of Israel’, ‘mutineers against the Turkish state in the name of Israel’, ‘a foreign threat’, ‘a threat to national security’, ‘hashhashins’ (assassins), ‘perpetrators of the Dink murder’ (a journalist of Armenian origin who was assassinated in 2007), ‘bandits’, ‘snakes’, and ‘people who altered the beliefs of Islam’.

The movement was equated with ‘illegal criminal organisations’, ‘a gang’, ‘a junta’ and an ‘intelligence organisation’. All of these accusations were made without any credible evidence.⁵¹

In his interview to the BBC, Cemal Ussak, who was at school with Erdogan but is now a leading follower of Gülen, stated “There is not a shred of evidence against us. It’s not the Erdogan I knew. The way he talks about us [Hizmet participants], the words he uses, reminds me of how Hitler spoke about the Jews.”⁵²

Boycotting the Hizmet Movement

Not only did Erdogan demonise a particular group of people, but he also openly called on the nation to take action against the movement. Erdogan called on the public to boycott any institutions established by members of the movement. Such a call to boycott a group of people because of their identity

is not only morally wrong, but is also prohibited as a hate crime under the Turkish Criminal Code.

Following are some examples of the AKP targeting the movement:

- Erdogan addressed citizens, including state officials, calling on them to spy on the movement so the government could act accordingly. He expressed his wish on several occasions that the movement be treated unfavourably by state authorities.
- Businesses owned by members of the movement were raided by tax inspectors and the police while the media reported it as an operation against the “parallel state”.
- Mining permits owned by a businessman close to the movement were cancelled, an act which was declared illegal by the administrative courts only a week after Erdogan targeted the mining facility.
- A member of the Turkish Parliament and a former AKP member, Muhammed Cetin, a known sympathiser of the movement, was treated unfavourably and even was asked to leave a plane operated by state-owned Turkish Airlines. In April 2014, the president of Turkish Airlines stated on a television program that they might not sell tickets to Muhammed Cetin anymore.
- Turkish Airlines withdrew 300 million USD of funds before its expiry term from Bank Asya which was established by members of the movement, waiving a profit-sharing loss of 10 million USD, when the government started a smear campaign against the bank.
- Mahir Zeynalov, an Azerbaijani national married to a Turkish citizen who was working as a journalist at Today’s Zaman, was deported from Turkey by law enforcement authorities for no apparent reason.
- As the movement is active in over 160 countries, Erdogan actively tried to cajole other governments to treat the movement unfavourably. He admitted in a meeting with the President of Azerbaijan he had warned the Azerbaijani leader about the dangers of the movement.
- Erdogan asked Turkey’s ambassadors to discredit the movement abroad instructing ambassadors that “the true face of this organisation should be clearly unveiled abroad as well”.⁵¹

Furthermore, Erdogan encouraged similar discriminatory behaviour in his political and public followers, thus succeeding in creating a mass witch

hunt and campaign of hatred towards the movement that may affect the Turkish diaspora in Australia as well.

Attacks to Sink Bank Asya

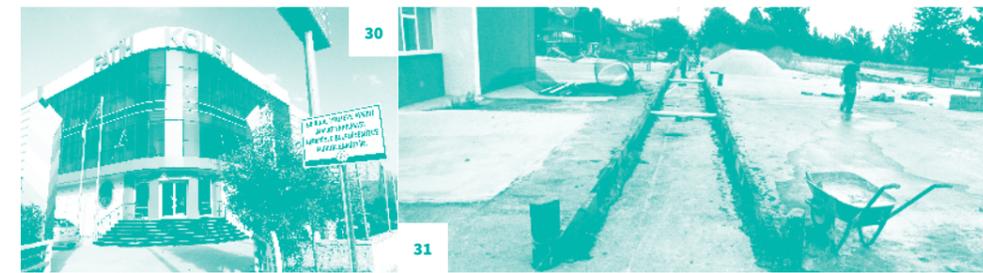
One of the most serious attacks by the government after the corruption scandal became public was on the banking front. The government started a defamation campaign to deliberately bankrupt Bank Asya using Turkey’s banking watchdog, The Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency (BDDK).

Interior Minister Efkân Ala claimed he had solid evidence that a bank (alluding to Bank Asya) had bought US dollars from the market a few days before the police raids and made a profit of over 2 billion USD when the price of the US dollar spiked after the operation. Bank Asya had to disclose a list of all its currency transactions prior to 17 December 2013 to disprove the accusations, and central bank figures later proved the assertion was libel when they provided evidence that no bank had procured extraordinary amounts of greenbacks from the market.⁵³

Attempt to Close Turkish Schools

The movement administers a wide network of schools and more than 2,000 educational establishments in more than 120 countries around the world. These schools provide education to thousands of students and are highly regarded for their academic and social achievements.

The aggressive policy Erdogan and the AKP had been following toward the Hizmet Movement reached a new height when the government attempted to shut down Turkish schools abroad that were affiliated with the movement. In April 2014, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu sent orders to Turkish embassies to take steps towards the closure of Turkish schools. The move drew the ire of opposition figures and diplomats who agreed that shutting down schools was a political and ideological attempt to eliminate the Hizmet Movement.⁴⁶ As a result of this campaign, the Turkish school in Gambia has closed and the schools in Azerbaijan have been nationalised.⁵⁴



Attacks on Schools and Students

Ministry of Education inspectors have been asking questioning at private schools, preparatory schools and dormitories across the country to discover from students and teachers their perception of the government and its officials. Critics claimed this questioning is aimed at profiling students and their families and intimidating critics of the government. The scandal drew the ire of educationists, civil society groups and opposition party members, who agreed the government and its inspectors have no right to involve minors in politics.⁴⁶

In addition, the municipalities run by the AKP government have been taking action against a number of schools belonging to the movement and removing signs advertising those schools. In early June 2014, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality stopped the construction of an education complex on privately owned land on the pretext the land would be used as a green area and a gathering spot in the event of an earthquake.⁴⁶

On 11 July 2014, the Bolu Municipality sealed two schools (Fatih Colleges) belonging to businessmen affiliated with the Hizmet Movement and in August, constructed a road inside the school despite the fact that the school is surrounded by empty plots of land and no residential area exists around the school.⁵⁵

Profiling the Nation

Another dimension of the AKP’s increasingly authoritarian repressive trend is the use of the National Intelligence Service (MIT) to spy on and profile citizens and civil servants. In June 2013, Turkish newspapers, such as the liberal Taraf daily, revealed draft legislation that would give unprecedented powers to MIT. While this legislation was not brought to parliament, reports were published

about MIT signing protocols with the Ministry of Education and Turkish Airlines to spy on and profile citizens⁵⁶.

On 4 December 2013, the AKP Deputy Chairman, Huseyin Celik, admitted to such profiling and claimed, in an almost comedic fashion, that this was an old habit of MIT that the AKP-appointed intelligence chief was unable to stem. This was dismaying because for decades, citizens who did not embrace the Kemalist ideology had been profiled and discriminated against and some of the current AKP leaders personally suffered from this policy in the past.¹⁵

Hindering Turkish Olympiads

The annual Turkish Olympiads, which have evolved into a brand to introduce the Turkish language and culture to the world, were prohibited from being held in Turkey for the first time in 2014. In March 2012, Erdogan publicly stated the Hizmet Movement, which sponsors the Olympiads, would no longer be allowed to conduct any activity related to the Olympiads within Turkish borders: “The [Olympiads] is over. They will no longer be able to hire stadiums or sports halls from our [AKP] municipalities to hold their events”. In compliance, the municipalities and governor’s offices refused to hire their venues for the Turkish Olympiads.

Consequently, the finals for the Turkish Olympiads began in Ethiopia on 31 May 2014 and moved on to Romania and Germany on 15 and 21 June, respectively. The events were attended by thousands and state officials of the host countries.⁵¹

“I burst into tears when I saw the pictures of the students leaving Turkey. They came from different parts of the world, became friends, and developed very strong ties during the 15-day period they spent in Turkey. They shed tears when the time came to return to their own countries. I was deeply touched to see them so,” Fethullah Gulen⁵⁷



evil, sneaky, putschists, tape editors, companions of Israel, mutineers against the Turkish state, a foreign threat, a threat to national security, hashhashins (assassins), bandits, snakes, bloodsuckers, leeches, parasitic Ivy...



32

Witch Hunt Against Public Servants

Since 17 December 2013, more than 40,000 police officers, bureaucrats, judges and prosecutors have been reassigned for no official reason other than their suspected links to the Hizmet Movement. Critics have described the arbitrary reassignments as a “witch hunt.”

In a public address in May 2014, Prime Minister Erdogan effectively confessed he was carrying out a witch hunt. Commenting on the reassignments, without providing any evidence, he boldly accused the reassigned officers of “betraying Turkey” because of their suspected alliances with the Hizmet Movement, which he currently views as “the public enemy number one. If reassigning individuals who betray this country is called a witch hunt, then, yes, we will carry out a witch hunt.”⁵¹

FUELLING ETHNIC FIRE

In the aftermath of the 17 December 2013 corruption probe, Erdogan used existing differences within the nation for political gains. His supporters come from a largely ethnic Turkish Sunni Muslim background, who make up the overwhelming majority in Turkey. He has been criticised of playing the sectarian and the ethnic card in the run-up to the 2014 presidential elections.⁵⁸

Here are some recent examples of his fuelling ethnic differences:

- On 5 August 2014, Erdogan complained the opposition was carrying out a smear campaign against him by claiming he was from another ethnic origin: “They called me a Georgian. Pardon me for saying this, but they said even uglier things: They called me an Armenian!”. “As far as I have learned from my father and grandfather, I am a Turk,” he added.
- In July 2014, he urged the opposition leader to make clear he belongs to the country’s minority Alawi community, an offshoot of Shiite Islam.

- Again in July 2014, he stated his presidential election rival Selahattin Demirtas was a Zaza, an ethnic group living in south-east Turkey who often consider themselves as Kurds.
- He repeatedly called his other presidential election rival Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu - the Egypt-born former head of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation - “the Egyptian”.⁵⁸

A SHORT LIVED PLEDGE

Erdogan was elected president receiving 51.7% of the votes cast on Sunday 10 August 2014. During his speech on the eve of his victory, Erdogan declared he wanted to build a “new Turkey” and promised to respect the desires of the whole country¹⁷, whether they voted for him or not.

Only four days after he promised to embrace all 77 million citizens of the nation, he quickly returned to his hate-fuelled rhetoric. On Thursday 14 August 2014 speaking to the heads of district branches of the AKP, Erdogan made harsh, critical statements against the national and international media, members of the judiciary and the Hizmet Movement. He asked party officials to continue targeting members of Hizmet after he leaves the government and the party management. He called the Hizmet Movement the “treacherous gang of Pennsylvania” (referring to Gülen who lives in Pennsylvania, US).⁵⁹

New York Times Editorial

“... Erdogan long ago veered off the democratic course, brutally cracking down on antigovernment protests last summer (2013) and severely constraining free speech, the press and the Internet. News outlets have been taken over by his cronies, and independent-minded journalists have been fired.

A corruption scandal at the end of 2013 embroiled Erdogan’s family and seemed to make him even more determined to

crush dissent. But instead of defending himself against the corruption charges according to a legal procedure, Mr. Erdogan seems determined to crush anyone or anything who crosses him — a strategy that almost certainly guarantees more dangerous political polarization and instability in Turkey.

His presidential election win means that Erdogan will be even less encumbered by the institutional checks and balances that are essential elements of any real democracy. If Erdogan succeeds in solidifying power, the future of Turkey’s already shaky democracy is more in doubt than ever, and the political uncertainties are expected to persist at least until the 2015 parliamentary election.”^{60 61}

“I deplore the brutal atrocities being committed by the ISIS terrorist group hiding behind a false religious rhetoric and join the people of conscience from around the world in calling for these perpetrators to immediately cease their cruel and inhuman acts. Any form of attack, suppression or persecution of minorities or innocent civilians is an act that contradicts the principles of the Qur’an and the tradition of our Prophet upon whom be peace and blessings.

ISIS members are either completely ignorant of the spirit of Islam and its blessed messenger, or their actions are designed to serve their individual interests or those of their political masters. Regardless, their actions represent those of a terrorist group and they should be labelled as such and be brought to justice.”

From Fethullah Gulen Statement on ISIS (New York, 22 August 2014)⁶²



33

“I deplore the brutal atrocities being committed by the ISIS terrorist group hiding behind a false religious rhetoric and join the people of conscience from around the world in calling for these perpetrators to immediately cease their cruel and inhuman acts. Any form of attack, suppression or persecution of minorities or innocent civilians is an act that contradicts the principles of the Qur’an and the tradition of our Prophet upon whom be peace and blessings.

ISIS members are either completely ignorant of the spirit of Islam and its blessed messenger, or their actions are designed to serve their individual interests or those of their political masters. Regardless, their actions represent those of a terrorist group and they should be labelled as such and be brought to justice.”

From Fethullah Gulen Statement on ISIS (New York, 22 August 2014)

Hizmet's Stance

Even against the barrage of assaults by Erdogan and the conspicuous difficulty imposed by the AKP government, the Hizmet Movement continues to work towards providing local and global educational services, peace-building and fellowship initiatives as these are central to its mission.

CRITICISMS OF THE AKP BY THE HIZMET MOVEMENT

Hizmet Movement's criticism of the AKP and its policies can be summarised as follows:

Society and Religion

The overall degeneration of public values and morals; the breakdown of the family unit and an increased crime and divorce rate; Islam losing its esteem through over-politicisation; people who claimed to be religious being looked upon with suspicion; the influence of religion and impressing of moral values being questioned; political grouping causing intense divisions and tensions in the nation; the use of divisive language; ethnic politics; strong polarisation within families on political grounds; the lowering of the legal age for smoking and alcohol use; the increase of smoking, drug and alcohol use and abuse; moral values becoming secondary; religion being used for political gains; and investments made in construction projects which neglect the human element.

Democracy and International Affairs

The concept of the separation of powers has been damaged; the judiciary and legislative powers were made submissive to executive power; media, universities and civil societies were placed under pressure; religious civil societies were pressured to provide support to the AKP ideology; freedom of speech was limited; state-sanctioned corruption reached serious levels; the model of the single-man leadership opened a path to the loss of checks and balances in government; and the role of mass media to hold the public to account was lost.

Turkey has become more closed off politically. It has lost much of its international reputation. Accession to the European Union is no longer a

priority and achieving EU standards was tossed aside. Hate-fuelled speech has been employed against foreign countries for political gains.

AFTER 17 DECEMBER

The Hizmet Movement believes that, following the 17 December 2013 corruption scandal and events, important matters became public knowledge:

- The AKP members' corruption in many areas became apparent
- The AKP's international reputation suffered significant loss
- The entire Turkish nation became subject to a single man
- Political benefit and rhetoric replaced ethical values of the parties
- Dividing the public and separating them into political camps became an election tool
- The corruption and inappropriate behaviour on record made the AKP more insistent to hold onto its powers
- The desire for absolute power and fear of losing it led to abuse of current power
- The idealism that gave birth to the AKP and the intention to benefit the nation were lost to party politics.

“Parallel Structure”

Erdogan and the AKP aim to portray the Hizmet Movement as a conspiratorial political movement, as a “parallel structure” within the state. Moreover, they claim the movement is responsible for all the corruption scandals and subsequent investigations. It appears Erdogan considers every judge, prosecutor and policeman as an infiltrated “Gülenist”.

No credible evidence has been produced for the accusations, even though Erdogan and his government have full control of the state apparatus. The fact the Hizmet Movement consists of volunteers with no formal membership, no headquarters or inner hierarchy

makes Erdogan's claims of a “state within a state” even more absurd. It's difficult to imagine such a diffuse movement organising an elaborate, highly co-ordinated operation to overthrow a government — not to mention this totally runs counter to Hizmet's principles and decades long public record. Hizmet's followers can be considered a civil collective persona made up of thousands of individuals and foundations that are inspired by Gülen's vision and inspirational teachings, which can be easily accessed through his many books. They are not members of some shadowy cult, as Erdogan and his followers like to claim.⁶³

During the last 30 years, thousands of students from all around the world have graduated from schools operated by the Hizmet Movement. Most of these well-educated individuals with high moral values became successful citizens in different walks of life – business, the police, medicine, the judiciary, army, politics, etc. It is quite likely that these individuals kept their close ties with the movement in their private lives to meet their social and spiritual needs. They are ordinary citizens aiming to contribute to society in various ways. Just because they are inspired by Gülen, does not turn them into operatives or an enemy of the state. Gülen and other representatives from the movement have repeatedly said, “If they commit any wrongdoing, the laws of the state must be applied to them just like anybody else”.

As Alp Aslandogan, the President of Alliance for Shared Values in US stated in his article in the Huffington Post, “unlike the civil society groups that AKP managed to endear through various mechanisms, the Hizmet movement had maintained its independence ... nothing stopped Hizmet participants from presenting the inconvenient truths about AKP's elite leadership.”¹⁵

Most of the members of Hizmet Movement believe that, when Erdogan could not get unconditional support from the movement or, put differently,

when Hizmet refused to be a part of the mechanisms of corruption and bribery as a result of political poisoning that comes with absolute power, he began to target the movement.

The Hizmet Movement believes Erdogan and the AKP have targeted the movement as a scapegoat trying to topple the government to deflect attention from the serious charges against Erdogan and his government. Erdogan's public assault on the movement is largely viewed as the government's attempt to conceal the embarrassing corruption scandal.⁶⁴

“In advanced democracies, individuals and civil society organizations freely disseminate their views and criticisms about the country's political issues, and no one expresses any concern about this.”



THE RESILIENCY OF THE MOVEMENT

Hizmet has shown resilience by managing to continue its work in these difficult times. For example:

- The preparatory schools continue to provide service to their students (they are scheduled to close in 2015). In July 2014, the university entrance exam results were announced with top accolades going to students who were taught at the Hizmet aligned tutorial centres.
- The Hizmet Movement avoided the prohibiting of the Turkish Olympiads in 2014 by choosing venues outside of Turkey to hold the events. The final was staged in a German stadium to a capacity crowd.
- Kimse Yok Mu? has continued to be at the frontline, delivering aid to disaster areas and receiving donations from the Turkish people. The generosity of the people has not waned as the relief organisation attended the needs of the Syrian refugees and people of Gaza during the difficult period of July-August 2014.
- The TUSKON business exhibitions are expanding into newer markets and businessmen from different parts of the world are seeking to pursue opportunities with members of the TUSKON confederation.
- The Journalist and Writers Foundation is actively promoting dialogue and understanding in Turkey and abroad, whether it be at conferences, seminars or symposiums.
- The Abant platform continues to attract top thinkers to discuss problems affecting Turkey and its region or the world.

Even against the barrage of assaults by Erdogan and the conspicuous difficulty imposed by the AKP government, the Hizmet Movement continues to work towards providing local and global educational services, peace-building and fellowship initiatives as these are central to its mission. As in past turbulent periods, the movement has shown resilience, displayed positive action and continued to work with other fair-minded organisations towards fulfilling these endeavours.

*Tolerance is
our safest refuge
and our fortress
against the
handicaps that
arise from schism,
factions, and the
difficulties inherent
in reaching mutual
agreement*

References

(Endnotes)

1. “Hizmet and Fethullah Gulen”, Alliance for shared Values, 2014, <http://www.afsv.org/about-us/hizmet-and-fethullah-gulen/#.U-GfN4CSxuA>
2. Wanda Krause, *Civility in Islamic Activism: Towards a Better Understanding of Shared Values for Civil Society Development* (This paper was presented at Gulen Conference in London in 2007)
3. Steve Wright, *The Work of Fethullah Gülen and the Role of Non-Violence in a Time of Terror*, This paper was presented at Gulen conference in London, 2007
4. Douglass Pratt, *Islamic Prospects for Inter-Religious Dialogue: The Contribution of Fethullah Gülen*, This paper was presented at Gulen conference in London, 2007
5. United Nations Economic and Social Council (October 3). “List of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council as of 1 September 2013”. United Nations Economic and Social Council. p. 3
6. “Kimse Yok Mu”, ECOSOC Civil Society Network, 2014, <http://esango.un.org/irene/?page=viewProfile&type=ngo&nr=7600§ion=9>
7. “HOW IS MONEY RAISED FOR GÜLEN-INSPIRED PROJECTS: EXAMPLES”, Gulen Movement, 2014, <http://www.gulenmovement.us/how-is-money-raised-for-gulen-inspired-projects-examples.html>
8. “A useful guide to understanding the Hizmet-AK Party tension”, Today's Zaman, 31 December 2013, <http://www.todayzaman.com/news-335381-a-useful-guide-to-understanding-the-hizmet-ak-party-tension.html>
9. “GYV rejects claim of Hizmet movement forming political party”, Gulen Movement, 2014, <http://gulenmovement.ca/gulen-movement-news/gyv-rejects-claim-of-hizmet-movement-forming-political-party/>
10. Karina Korostelina, *Redefining “Us” and “Them”: Gülen's Approach to Transformation of Perceptions between Muslims and Non-Muslims*, This paper was presented at Gulen conference at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. in 2008
11. “Justice and Development Party”, Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1018363/Justice-and-Development-Party>
12. “Justice and Development Party (Turkey)”, Wikipedia, 2014, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_and_Development_Party_\(Turkey\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_and_Development_Party_(Turkey))
13. “Gülen endorses reform package, appealing for ‘yes’ on Sept. 12”, Today's Zaman, 2 August 2010, <http://www.todayzaman.com/newsDetail.action;jsessionid=ByibGEARLnEoQXYJ-KGZG4vb?newsId=217884&columnistId=0>
14. “Turkey's Fading Democracy”, The World Post, 10 February 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alp-aslandogan/turkeys-fading-democracy_b_4733996.html
15. “Erdoğan: Turkey to bring more Gazans if Israel allows”, Today's Zaman, 14 August 2014, http://www.todayzaman.com/diplomacy_erdogan-turkey-to-bring-more-gazans-if-israel-allows_355656.html
16. “Turkey may send floating power station to Gaza”, Today's Zaman, 19 August 2014, http://www.todayzaman.com/diplomacy_turkey-may-send-floating-power-station-to-gaza_356118.html
17. “Turkey needs to turn away from Mr. Erdogan's repression”, The Washington Post, 15 August 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/turkey-needs-to-turn-away-from-mr-erdogans-repression/2014/08/15/c47b2b7a-2334-11e4-958c-268a320a60ce_story.html
18. “[Part 4] Gülen calls for respect of diversity in Turkey to end polarization”, Today's Zaman, 19 March 2014, <http://www.todayzaman.com/newsDetail.action;jsessionid=OqUPslb4hGRLUdL7fhFw7Gj?newsId=342515&columnistId=0>
19. “Islamic scholar Gülen criticizes Turkish gov't response to Gezi protests”, Hizmet Movement, 20 March 2014, <http://gulen101.org/islamic-scholar-gulen-criticizes-turkish-govt-response-to-gezi-protests/>
20. “Turkish ministers' sons arrested in corruption and bribery investigation”, The Guardian, 18 December 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/17/turkish-ministers-sons-arrested-corruption-investigation>
21. “Turkey Brief: The Preparatory School Debate”, Rethink Institute, December 2013, <http://www.rethinkinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Bilgin-Prep-School-Debate.pdf>
22. “MHP'li Yılmaz: Gülen, bu ülkenin yetiştirdiği değerli bir kıymet”, YouTube, 23 January 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAMi2zDBiDM> (It is a speech by MHP representative at Turkish parliament but it is in Turkish)
23. “Turkish Olympics close with perfect ceremony”, Today's Zaman, 16 June 2013, <http://www.todayzaman.com/newsDetail.action;jsessionid=WBim1lUnU4yeqq+CZPs0h3+M?newsId=318464&columnistId=0>
24. “Transparency International Turkey Statement On Latest Corruption Scandal”, Transparency International, 19 December 2013, http://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/transparency_international_turkey_statement_on_latest_corruption_scandal
25. “Turkey's graft investigation and PM Erdoğan's response”, Turkish Review, 2 January 2014, http://www.turkishreview.org/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=223564#timeline
26. “Turkey's political crisis isn't just about Twitter and YouTube. Here are two important factors you should understand.”, The Washington Post, 29 March 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/03/29/turkeys-political-crisis-isnt-just-about-twitter-and-youtube-here-are-two-important-factors-you-should-understand/>
27. “Turkey cracking down on Internet usage”, USA Today, 5 February 2014, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/02/05/turkey-internet-censorship/5220339/>
28. “The Erdogan tapes”, ALMONITOR, 27 February 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/02/supporters-deny-taped-conversation-erdogan-son.html#ixzz39TxxvldH>
29. “Are The Erdogan Corruption Tapes Real?”, International Business Times, 27 February 2014, <http://www.ibtimes.com/are-erdogan-corruption-tapes-real-1558185>
30. “PM Erdoğan's tapes not doctored, specialists agree”, Today's Zaman, 26 February 2014, <http://www.todayzaman.com/newsDetail.action;jsessionid=Wxmzkfu62ATlkIMQEuYkkVIN?newsId=340570&columnistId=0>
31. “President Erdoğan and the new Turkey”, Today's Zaman, 11 August 2014, http://www.todayzaman.com/op-ed_president-erdogan-and-the-new-turkey_355284.html
32. Metropoll, 2013, <http://www.metropoll.com.tr/report>
33. “Ertuğrul Günay: Cemaat'in evrenselliği Erdoğan'a uymadı”, Bugun Gazetesi, 27 July 2014, <http://gundem.bugun.com.tr/ilk-kez-acikladi-haberi/1204428>
34. “Separation of powers an obstacle, says Erdoğan”, Hurriyet Daily News, 18 December 2012, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/separation-of-powers-an-obstacle-says-erdogan.aspx?pageID=238&nid=37052>
35. “Gül signals veto if controversial HSYK bill ends up on his desk”, Today's Zaman, 17 January 2014, <http://www.todayzaman.com/news-336881-gul-signals-veto-if-controversial-hsyk-bill-ends-up-on-his-desk.html>
36. “Turkey's president approves law tightening grip on judiciary”, Reuters, 26 February 2014, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/02/26/uk-turkey-judiciary-idUKBREA1P1MF20140226>
37. “AK Parti'den Savcı Öz'e tehdit gibi twit”, Internethaber, 9 January 2014, <http://www.internethaber.com/ak-partiden-savci-oze-tehdit-gibi-twit-628436h.htm>
38. “Erdoğan's war against Hizmet: Step by step”, Today's Zaman, 22 July 2014, http://www.todayzaman.com/national_erdogans-war-against-hizmet-step-by-step_353694.html
39. “‘Next ops to target journalists, businessmen after HSYK elections’”, Today's Zaman, 5 September 2014, http://www.todayzaman.com/national_next-ops-to-target-journalists-businessmen-after-hsyk-elections_357820.html
40. “State-seized media assets of Çukurova conglomerate sold to businessman Ethem Sancak”, Hurriyet Daily News, 22 November 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/state-seized-media-assets-of-cukurova-conglomerate-sold-to-businessman-ethem-sancak.aspx?PageID=238&NID=58344&NewsCatID=345>
41. “In Turkey, Media Bosses Are Undermining Democracy”, The New York Times, 19 July 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/21/opinion/sunday/in-turkey-media-bosses-are-undermining-democracy.html?pagewanted=all&r=1&>
42. “Controversial Internet bill passed, raises concerns over freedom”, Today's Zaman, 5 February 2014, <http://www.todayzaman.com/newsDetail.action;jsessionid=v1x6QidU3mWjKwXQsU80UjWK?newsId=338612&columnistId=0>
43. “Now Turkey blocks YouTube: Days after Twitter ban, video site is barred after leaked audio recording of Turkish officials discussing Syria appeared online”, Daily Mail Australia, 28 March 2014, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2590855/Now-Turkey-blocks-YouTube-Days-Twitter-ban-video-site-barred-leaked-audio-recording-Turkish-officials-discussing-Syria-appeared-online.html#ixzz39tdH3E1i>
44. “Turkey Twitter users flout Erdogan ban on micro-blogging site”, The Guardian, 21 March 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/21/turkey-twitter-users-flout-ban-erdogan>
45. “Erdoğan's government blocks access to Twitter ahead of local vote”, Today's Zaman, 20 March 2014, <http://www.todayzaman.com/newsDetail.action;jsessionid=juGQfHStkEZK8HVansNm8iY?newsId=342632&columnistId=0>
46. “Erdoğan gov't transforms Turkey into land of oppression, bans”, Today's Zaman, 20 July 2014, http://www.todayzaman.com/national_erdogan-govt-transforms-turkey-into-land-of-oppression-bans_353557.html
47. “Turkey lifts Twitter ban after court ruling”, Reuters, 3 April 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/03/us-turkey-twitter-idUSBREA320E120140403>
48. “Turkey Lifts Two-Month Block on YouTube”, Time, 4 June 2014, <http://time.com/2820984/youtube-turkey-ban-lifted/>
49. “Erdoğan gov't transforms Turkey into a land of oppression and bans”, Temporal, 20 July 2014, <http://yavuzbaydar.wordpress.com/2014/07/20/erdogan-govt-transforms-turkey-into-a-land-of-oppression-and-bans/>
50. “Columnist censored, reporter fired as pressure on Doğan media grows”, Today's Zaman, 15 August 2014, <http://www.todayzaman.com/news-355833-.html>
51. “Hate Speech And Beyond: Targeting The Gülen Movement In Turkey”, Rethink Institute, June 2014, <http://www.rethinkinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Hate-Speech-and-Beyond.pdf>
52. “Turkey election: The price of Erdogan's popularity”, News Europe, 8 August 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28692940>
53. “Erdoğan gov't abusing regulatory agencies to punish opponents”, PRO_REG, 21 January 2014, <http://www.regulacao.gov.br/noticias/2014/01/erdogan-govt-abusing-regulatory-agencies-to-punish-opponents>
54. “Turkish schools abroad victims of AKP-Gulen conflict”, ALMONITOR, 11 April 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/04/international-schools-abroad-suffer-gulen-conflict.html#>
55. “Bolu municipality builds road inside Fatih College's garden”, Today's Zaman, 10 August 2014, <http://www.todayzaman.com/newsDetail.action;jsessionid=Xbylzc8F5eQQ1itTUTL6Z80D?newsId=355188&columnistId=0>
56. “Turkish Education Ministry engaged in profiling of staff, daily claims”, Today's Zaman, 16 december 2013, <http://www.todayzaman.com/news-334173-turkish-education-ministry-engaged-in-profiling-of-staff-daily-claims.html>
57. Fethullah Gulen, fgulen.com, 2012, <http://fgulen.com/en/home/1323-fgulen-com-english/press/news/32571-todays-zaman-gulen-says-success-of-turkish-olympiad-belongs-to-nation>
58. “Turkey PM Erdogan under fire over ‘ugly to be called Armenian’ jibe”, YahooNews, 7 August 2014, <https://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a/24649744/turkey-pm-erdogan-under-fire-over-ugly-to-be-called-armenian-jibe/>
59. “Erdoğan returns to hate speech, drops pledge to ‘embrace all’”, Today's Zaman, 14 August 2014, <http://www.todayzaman.com/news-355697-.html>
60. “Prime Minister Erdogan's Revenge”, The New York Times, 31 March 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/01/opinion/prime-minister-erdogans-revenge.html>
61. “New Threats to Democracy in Turkey”, The New York Times, 18 August 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/19/opinion/will-recep-tayyip-erdogan-extend-the-presidential-powers.html?ma_bReward=RI%3A13&action=click&pgtype=Homepage®ion=CColumn&module=Recommendation&src=rechp&WT.nav=RecEngine&r=0
62. “Fethullah Gulen Statement on ISIS”, Alliance for shared Values, 2014, <http://www.afsv.org/fethullah-gulen-statement-isis/#.VAuDQPmSwqJ>
63. “Where Is Turkey Going? (2)”, Hizmet Movement News Portal, 8 April 2014, http://hizmetnews.com/11789/turkey-going-2/#.U-X6M_mSwqJ
64. “Gov't says public bank mulls purchasing Bank Asya” Today's Zaman, 6 August 2014, http://www.todayzaman.com/latest-news_govt-says-public-bank-mulls-purchasing-bank-asya_354841.html

*dedicated to serving
humanity with the sole aim
attaining God's consent*