



ERDOĞAN'S LONG ARM: THE CASE OF SWEDEN



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About Stockholm Center for Freedom

Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF) is an advocacy organization that promotes the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights and freedoms with a special focus on Turkey, a nation of 80 million that is facing significant backsliding in its parliamentary democracy under its autocratic leaders.

SCF, a non-profit organization, was set up by a group of journalists who have been forced to live in self-exile in Sweden against the backdrop of a massive crackdown on press freedom in Turkey.

SCF is committed to serving as a reference source by providing a broader picture of rights violations in Turkey, monitoring daily developments on fact-based investigative journalism and documenting individual cases of the infringement of fundamental rights. The founders of SCF are top-notch journalists who had managed national dailies in Turkey and worked for leading media outlets before they were forced to leave. They have the expertise, human resources and network on the ground to track events in Turkey despite serious challenges.

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Erdogan's Long Arm: **The Case of Sweden**

INTRODUCTION

Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) government, rooted in political Islam and led by authoritarian President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has escalated its witch-hunt to persecute critics abroad through government institutions as well as by using NGOs and other entities as fronts. As a result, rights violations including abductions, physical attacks, profiling, discrimination, threats and hate crimes have gone beyond Turkey's borders and have become a problem in intergovernmental affairs as the Turkish government has been found to be violating international treaties, interfering in other countries' affairs and violating their laws.

In this report, which takes Sweden as a case study, SCF reveals controversial methods employed by the Turkish government in harassing, intimidating, threatening and profiling critics and opponents in the Scandinavian country. Although Turkey resorted to unlawful abductions in flawed democracies such as Pakistan and Malaysia,¹ where corruption is rampant and the rule of law problematic, it obviously cannot find a willing partner in well-developed democracies like Sweden to spirit away critics and put them in jail where they will be tortured and abused.

Instead, Ankara employs other means and methods to expand to Sweden the persecution it is pursuing at home against participants of the Gülen movement (also known as Hizmet). At some times the Turkish government uses official institutions such as the embassy and consulates, while at other times it has pro-Erdogan NGOs, imams and other groups harass and create a climate of fear for Turks who reside in Sweden. For example, journalist Abdullah Bozkurt, who lives in exile in Sweden and is critical of the Erdogan government, received threats in what appeared to be part of a deliberate and systematic campaign by the Erdogan government and its affiliates to intimidate Turks in Sweden.

Unlawful profiling activities conducted by the Turkish government that amounted to espionage in a friendly country were confirmed by extensive coverage in the Swedish media and corroborated by the former Turkish ambassador in Stockholm. The profiling and spying on critics have had repercussions for Swedish citizens as well. In one case, a Swedish citizen of Turkish descent was interrogated at a police station

1] See SCF's report published in May 2017 titled "Erdogan's Long Arm: The Case of Malaysia" <http://stockholmcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Erdogans-Long-Arms-The-Case-Of-Malaysia.pdf>

in Turkey following a report filed about him by pro-Erdogan people in Sweden. An asylum seeker was kicked out of a Turkish mosque by the chairman of the mosque association when he went to prayers, although another person reported that he stopped going to the mosque because of the imam's political sermons.

A Turkish asylum seeker's house in Malmö was attacked by gunfire. A campaign of hatred and slander has been launched against not only people but also educational and other institutions that are believed to be affiliated with the movement. Private Swedish schools established by businesspeople seen as close to the Gülen movement have faced calls for a boycott by pro-Erdogan groups in Sweden. An education center in Göteborg was attacked with eggs.

Although critics from all segments of Turkish society including Kurds and Alevis are being targeted in general for stigmatization by the Turkish government, participants of civic group the Gülen movement (which is inspired by US-based Turkish Muslim cleric Fethullah Gülen and is focused on science education, volunteerism, community involvement, social work and interfaith and intercultural dialogue) have borne the brunt of this unprecedented witch-hunt in Turkey and abroad. Turkish embassies and government agencies including intelligence services and nongovernmental organizations affiliated with the AKP government are all involved in the profiling and harassment of Gülen movement participants.

This study expands on SCF's 2017 reports titled "Erdogan's Long Arm in Europe," which mapped out the methods of the Turkish government's intimidation campaign targeting critics and dissidents abroad using the Netherlands and Norway as case studies. It exposes how Turkish diplomats, government-sponsored imams and other operatives working for Erdogan spy on expatriates, gather intelligence on critics and harass and threaten them. Hundreds of complaints were filed by victims with Dutch and Norwegian authorities over threats received, prompting the Dutch and Norwegian governments to launch investigations. Similar complaints were also filed with Swedish authorities.

The Turkish government's covert as well as overt operations abroad targeting vulnerable groups among Turkish expatriate communities that are not seen as supportive of Erdogan have led to threats and insults. For example, Zaman Vandaag newspaper editor Hakan Büyük, born and raised in the Netherlands, has received threats such as "You are going to be killed"; "We are going to shoot you in the head"; "Live your life always watching your back"; "You will fall into our hands. We will shed your blood"; and "If we do not send our Çatlis² [referring to a notorious

2] Abdullah Çatlı, the most well-known mafia figure in Turkey, was recruited by elements of the Turkish state security services in the 1980s to carry out assassinations abroad, targeting members of an Armenian terrorist group called ASALA. Çatlı died in the controversial Susurluk car accident in 1993, yet he is still referred to as a hero by many nationalist groups, and his name is often invoked to threaten people who had to flee Turkey.

hitman] and get these bastards shot in the head in the middle of Europe, even the Netherlands will start standing up to us.”³ He reported these threats to the police.

Engin Tenekeci, who worked as a reporter in Oslo for Zaman, Turkey’s one-time highest circulating newspaper with 1.2 million copies sold on a daily basis at its peak, has been threatened by AKP thugs via his social media account. Tenekeci, a member of the Norwegian Union of Journalists, went through a difficult time because of these threats and pressures. A user called Hakan Erdoğan messaged Tenekeci on July 26, 2016, saying: “Engin, be afraid and run. I will make Norway unbearable for you and people like you, you undignified bastard.” He swore at Tenekeci and Gülen and said: “We will hunt all of you and eliminate you. Putschist sons of bitches.” Tenekeci filed a complaint, and the case is still pending.

In pursuit of his critics, Erdoğan and his associates in the government have unfortunately instrumentalized embassies and consulates, representation offices of public institutions and state-funded and/or controlled organizations and foundations that are disguised as nongovernmental organizations or independent groups. The government bodies that engage in profiling and witch-hunt activities include primarily the National Intelligence Organization (MİT), the Overseas Turks and Kin Communities Agency (YTB), the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA), the Religious Affairs Directorate (Diyanet), the Anadolu news agency (AA), the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), the Yunus Emre Institute and the Maarif (Education) Foundation.

A second group consists of parallel structures supported, funded or organized by entities attached to the Turkish government or the office of President Erdoğan. Organizations such as the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD) in Europe, and the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) and the Turkish Heritage Organization in the US, among others, can be found in this group. In addition to their main areas of activity, these organizations perform such functions as advocating for the ruling party abroad, consolidating support for the AKP among Turkish expatriates and Muslim immigrant groups and occasionally working as an intelligence service to profile and collect information about Turkish dissidents or critics in their respective countries.

There is no doubt that Ankara’s harassment and intimidation tactics abroad not only violate international treaties and conventions regulating intergovernmental relations but also infringe on the laws of the foreign countries in which these groups operate. At the very least, they may amount to the violation of the Swedish Hets mot folkgrupp law, which covers hate speech and disturbance

3] “Dutch-Turkish Journalist Faces Death Threats By Erdogan’s Fanatics”, SCF, 16 March 2017, <https://stockholmcf.org/dutch-turkish-journalist-faces-death-threats-by-erdogans-fanatics/>

of the public peace. Chapter 16, Article 8 of the Penal Code (Brottsbalken, SFS 1962:700) provides that a person who, in a disseminated statement or communication, threatens or expresses contempt for a national, ethnic or other such group of persons with an allusion to race, color, national or ethnic origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation, shall be convicted of agitation against a national or ethnic group. The offense carries a penalty of up to two years' imprisonment. If the offense is considered minor the penalty is a fine, and if it is considered to be aggravated the penalty is imprisonment for no less than six months and no more than four years.⁴

1. Erdoğan: Members of the Gülen Movement Have No Right to Life

The Turkish president made scandalous remarks in September 2016 when he said that “no country or region around the world will ever be a safe haven for FETÖ⁵ and its militants.”⁶ Erdoğan has persistently voiced threats against those who have been forced to leave the country due to persecution, and at public rallies broadcast live and attended by tens of thousands of his diehard fans he has vowed to hunt down Gülen movement participants and kill them.

In a speech delivered at his palace on October 19, 2017 he said: “We will never leave alone those who fled abroad; we will chase them until they are punished like they deserve. Those who betrayed Turkey and the Turkish nation will not be comfortable for the rest of their lives whether in Turkey or abroad.”⁷

In another speech Erdoğan said: “They are the elements of dissension within us, like cancer cells. A comprehensive cleanup is required so that not the slightest trace of it is left behind. And that’s what we are doing right now. ... Those who fled abroad in the murky atmosphere of the coup d’état should never feel safe. ... We are currently working on a new initiative. We are calling on those who went [abroad] to return. A

4] “Case of Vejdeland and others v. Sweden”, European Court of Human Rights, 9 May 2012, <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-109046>

5] The government started referring to the peaceful civic group Hizmet as a terrorist organization (namely, the Gülenist Terror Group, or FETÖ) following major corruption investigations in December 2013 that implicated Erdoğan and his family members. Gülen has been a vocal critic of corruption in the Turkish government and has opposed Erdoğan’s aiding and abetting of radical jihadist groups in Syria since the civil war broke out in 2011. Erdoğan started targeting Gülen and the movement openly after the corruption was exposed and even accused Hizmet of being behind the failed coup of July 15, 2016. Mr. Gülen, however, rejects the accusations and has called for an independent international commission to be set up to investigate the failed coup. The Turkish government has failed to present any direct evidence linking the cleric or the movement to the abortive coup.

6] “Hiçbir ülke FETÖ için güvenli sığınak değildir”, TRT Haber, 19 September 2016, <http://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/hicbir-ulke-feto-icin-guvenli-siginak-degildir-272161.html>

7] “Kaçan FETÖcüler de kurtulamayacak” (Fugitive FETÖ members will not get away with it), Yeni Akit, 19 October 2017, <http://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/kacan-fetoculer-de-kurtulamayacak-386626.html>

deadline will be given to them. If they don't return, we will do whatever is needed. Indeed, the children of this country should return and tell whatever they know to the relevant authorities. If they don't, they'll pay for it. At any rate, we won't support them as our citizens. ... We will take due action when they are apprehended.”⁸

At a joint press conference with President Hashim Thaçi of Kosovo in Ankara on December 29, 2016, Erdoğan said: “Our crackdown on them both at home and abroad is under way and will continue in the future. Wherever they flee, we will be hot on the heels of the heads and militants of terrorist organizations.”⁹

Speaking at a rally in the Black Sea province of Zonguldak on April 4, 2017, Erdoğan said: “We are purging every Gülenist in the army, in the police and in state institutions. And we will continue cleansing [these organizations of] them because we will eradicate this cancer from the body of this country and state. They will not enjoy the right to life. ... Our fight against them will continue until the end. We won't leave them merely wounded.”¹⁰

These quotes are only a small part of what Erdoğan has long been voicing in his campaign of fear that vilifies opponents and critics. This has led to physical attacks on the lives and properties of critics abroad, calls for boycotts of their businesses, death threats and punishment of their relatives back in Turkey. He uses every opportunity to exert pressure on ambassadors and employs similar propaganda with the heads of state or government he meets.

2. Open Threats to Turks in Exile by the Turkish Government

Erdoğan's provocative statements signaling his intent to assassinate his critics, especially Hizmet participants in foreign countries, were also confirmed by similar remarks from other government officials as well as by Erdoğan loyalists and propagandists in the pro-government media. For example, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said on April 4, 2017: “We will not stop chasing after them [Gülen movement participants] at home and abroad. We are breathing down their necks. We won't give these traitors and dishonorable people room to breathe.

8] “Erdoğan: Türkiye istediğin zaman gelen istediğin zaman çıkan bir ülke değil” (Erdoğan: Turkey is not a country you can come in and go out of at will), Milliyet, 14 October 2016, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Erdoğan-dan-onemli-aciklamalar--siyaset-2327388/>

9] “Erdoğan-Taçi Ortak Basın Toplantısı” (Joint press conference of Erdoğan and Thaçi), Milliyet, 12 December 2016, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Erdoğan-taci-ortak-basin-toplantisi-ankara-yerelhaber-1745175/>

10] “Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan IKBY'ye bayrak tepkisi”, TRT Haber, 4 April 2017, <http://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdoganErdoğan-dan-ikbyye-bayrak-tepkisi-307472.html>

**Turkish
president
Recep
Tayyip
Erdoğan**



We'll hold them to account.”¹¹

In a public speech delivered on March 8, 2017, Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu revealed that the government was plotting to do something abroad to critics from the Gülen movement: “They think they can go and flee to Germany. ... One day, these FETÖ terrorists may be shocked to see where they are located, you know. I'm telling you from here, it is not that easy. ... Both the security and strategy of this country [Turkey] have now changed. We won't leave those who betrayed Turkey alone wherever they may be around the world.”¹²

This statement suggested that the Turkish government was planning to use mafia-style clandestine operations to target Gülen movement participants in foreign countries.

The Wall Street Journal¹³ has exposed how in September 2016 Turkish government officials discussed with retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn the illegal removal from the United States of Turkish Islamic cleric Fethullah Gülen and his extrajudicial return to Turkey while Flynn was serving as an advisor to the Trump presidential campaign. (Flynn has since been ousted as national security advisor of the new administration.) Details of the discussion in New York were learned from James Woolsey, former director of the CIA, who was in attendance, and from others who were briefed on the meeting. Also in attending the meeting were Berat Albayrak, energy minister of Turkey and President Erdoğan's son-in-law, and Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu,

11] Dışişleri Bakanı Çavuşoğlu böyle karşılandı, Milliyet, 4 April 2017, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/disisleri-bakani-cavusoglu-boyle-siyaset-2407598/>

12] “Bir de başımıza Almanya çıktı”, Hürriyet, 8 March , 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/bir-de-basimiza-almanya-cikti-40388917>

13] “Ex-CIA Director: Mike Flynn and Turkish Officials Discussed Removal of Erdoğan Foe From U.S.” 24 March 2017, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/ex-cia-director-mike-flynn-and-turkish-officials-discussed-removal-of-erdogan-foe-from-u-s-1490380426?emailToken=JRryd/FyZX6VhNU9bMwxxBgjb6BNB%2B6TS1jLK2qPP0nPuTnbpFOnweA8gd-fyvX61Rkdh55UD4WA%2BTjzYhHEvUM6KkKNkilqPmNQq5ba2AnOPUqekVSGeuUVsOzb%2BSQs4LNcH01N-J8NWhB2p6UK19owFRA%3D%3D>

according to foreign lobbying disclosure documents filed by Flynn with the Justice Department in March 2017.

Woolsey arrived at the meeting on September 19 in the middle of discussions about the cleric and found the topic “startling and the actions being discussed possibly illegal,” he told the WSJ, adding that the idea was “a covert step in the dead of night to whisk this guy away.” Woolsey said specific tactics for removing Gülen were not discussed, but if they had been, he “would have spoken up and questioned their legality.”

Special counsel Robert Mueller is reportedly investigating an alleged plan that Michael Flynn discussed with Turkish representatives to forcibly remove Gülen.¹⁴ According to an article that appeared in The Wall Street Journal and was sourced with “people with knowledge of discussions” between Flynn and the Turkish representatives, Flynn and his son, Michael Flynn Jr., were to be paid as much as \$15 million to deliver Gülen to the Turkish government.

If Turkey dares to plan abductions even from the US, it can also plan similar kidnappings and assassinations in other countries including those in Europe.

Berat Albayrak, minister of energy and natural resources and the son-in-law of President Erdoğan, made the following scandalous remarks to Turks living abroad: “How can you stand it? If I were you, I would have strangled them [members of the Gülen movement].”¹⁵ “This group of traitors is all over the world now. In order to defame this country, nation and religion, in order to betray, they spread their poison and betrayal abroad every day by means of their disgusting diaspora network. You must see them in the countries you are going to. If I were you I would not have been able to restrain myself, I would have strangled them wherever I saw them. ... These fugitives, stateless traitors, live very normal lives,” he added.¹⁶

İbrahim Kalın, spokesperson for the presidency, admitted that the National Intelligence Organization (MİT) has been pursuing participants of the Gülen movement who sought asylum in other countries. “In general, MİT is in contact with various countries about people who are abroad as fugitives and have requested asylum. We demand that they be captured and extradited to Turkey,” Kalın stated at a press conference on August 17, 2017.¹⁷

14] “Mueller Probes Flynn’s Role in Alleged Plan to Deliver Cleric to Turkey”, 10 November 2017, Wall Street Journal, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/mueller-probes-flynn-s-role-in-alleged-plan-to-deliver-cleric-to-turkey-1510309982?mg=prod/accounts-wsj>

15] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYWmX3ASWCs> accessed 30 August 2017.

16] “Enerji ve Tabii Kaynaklar Bakanı Albayrak: Gördüğüm yerde boğazlarım” (Berat Albayrak, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources: I will choke them wherever I see them), CNN Türk, 18 August 2017, <https://www.cnntrk.com/ekonomi/enerji-ve-tabii-kaynaklar-bakani-albayrak-gordugum-yerde-bogazlarim>

17] “Cumhurbaşkanlığı Sözcüsü Kalın: Darbeciler Türkiye’ye gelseydi Almanya ne yapardı?” spokesperson of Presidency Kalın: What would Germany do if putschists come to Turkey?), Akşam, 17 August 2017, <http://www.aksam.com.tr/siyaset/cumhurbaskanligi-sozcusu-kalindan-gundeme-iliskin-aciklamalar/haber-652480>

3. Turkish Government Propagandists Amplify Threats

Picking up on Turkish officials' threatening remarks, Erdoğan's propagandists in the pro-government media openly entertain unlawful acts such as murders and abductions without any repercussions or criminal liability. For example, after Russian Ambassador Andrei Karlov was brazenly assassinated in Ankara on December 19, 2016, by a policeman apparently affiliated with the al-Nusra Front, staunchly pro-Erdoğan journalist Cem Küçük said Turkey's agenda was now to kill "FETÖ" militants abroad. "Destroy some three or five of them and see what happens. Shoot them in the head and see how they are scared. Kill Ekrem Dumanlı and Emre Uslu... Abdullah Bozkurt is living in Stockholm and his home address is known," Küçük said, speaking on TV station TGRT.¹⁸

Ersoy Dede, another AKP spin doctor, referred to the 1980s, when Turkey's "deep state" assassinated ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia) militants abroad.¹⁹ "I saw how this company finished off ASALA. I saw how [PKK leader Abdullah] Öcalan was kicked to the curb," he said during a live broadcast with another pro-AKP journalist, Hikmet Genç, on Kanal 24 on August 10, 2016²⁰ while talking about Hizmet-affiliated people who were forced to flee abroad.

In the program they talk about exiled Turkish journalists Tuncay Opçin, Emre Uslu and Ekrem Dumanlı, who all now live in the US. "One day, we will wake up to meet the scoundrels who were caught with false passports in the International Arrivals Terminal of Sabiha Gökçen Airport in Istanbul as they try to enter Turkey. The news bulletins will report it as 'Tuncay Opçin, Ekrem Dumanlı, etc., were caught as they tried to enter the country with false passports in order to say goodbye to their families.' This will be Opçin and Dumanlı's reaction: 'Where are we now? What is this place? How come we ended up here?' ... Can you get what I am trying to say?"²¹ Then, his discussion partner, Genç, said, "If you explain this by citing ASALA, I will listen to it from a different perspective..." Later, Dede said the Gülen movement could be finished off similar to how the Turkish Republic finished off ASALA. "That is, they should not sleep soundly. Tuncay should not sleep safe and sound in his bed tonight," he vowed. Genç added, "Emre Uslu should not sleep soundly. This is my

18] "Why not kill fugitive Gülenist suspects abroad, journalist suggests", *Hürriyet Daily News*, 22 December 2017, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/why-not-kill-fugitive-gulenist-suspects-abroad-journalist-suggests-124578>

19] The Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) conducted attacks against Turkish diplomats between 1975 and 1985. It undertook assassinations and carried out attacks on civilian targets other than Turks. Listed as a terrorist organization by the US in those years, ASALA killed 42 Turkish diplomats. In response, Turkey adopted the tactic of combating non-state organizations. A 'deep' network, masterminded by the National Intelligence Organization (MİT), used ultranationalists to attack ASALA militants.

20] "Pro-gov't columnist issues death threat to dissident journos", *turkeypurge.com*, 8 December 2016 <http://turkeypurge.com/pro-govt-columnist-issues-death-threat-to-dissident-journos>

21] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1W6H2oDZl8o>

call to them. Tuncay Opçin should not sleep safe and sound. Ekrem Dumanlı should not think that he has fled and gotten away.”²²

Doğu Perinçek, leader of the neo-nationalist Vatan (Homeland) Party, which is an ally of Erdoğan, said the members of the Gülen movement must be wiped out even if they are not criminals or were not involved with the failed coup. He went even further by saying that the purge should include anybody who is associated with the group or shares the same goals or is aligned ideologically with them.²³ Sabahattin Önkibar, a member of the Vatan Party and writer for the neo-nationalist *Aydınlık* newspaper,²⁴ stated that people close to the movement should be destroyed all together. Önkibar claimed that Ottoman Sultan Fatih Sultan Mehmet burnt alive thousands of people from a community named “Hurufis” to save the empire. “If he had not burned the Hurufis alive with no questions asked, the Sublime State [Ottoman Empire] would have ended. Disappeared.” He added: “Now you will ask me if should we burn Fethullahists²⁵ like this? No, I wouldn’t say that, but something should be done to them. The prisons don’t do enough.”

4. Witch Hunt Against the Gülen Movement

Turkey’s ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) government started targeting the Gülen movement when AKP Chairman and then-Prime Minister Erdoğan was incriminated in the nation’s largest corruption investigation, revealed in December 2013. The scandal led to the resignation of four Cabinet ministers, but Erdoğan managed to hush the probe up after sacking members of the judiciary and law enforcement agencies that exposed his graft network. He immediately blamed the investigation on the movement as part of efforts to shift the blame and avoid accountability. He branded the probe as tantamount to a coup and launched a witch-hunt against Gülen movement members.

Things went from bad to worse in the aftermath of the July 15, 2016 failed coup,²⁶ which Erdoğan again accused the movement of staging with no evidence presented

22] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1W6H2oDZI8o>

23] “Perinçek’ten, Hizmet’e yönelik soykırım itirafı: Suçlu olmalarına gerek yok, hepsini temizlemeliyiz!”, 29 October 2017, <http://romanyahaber.com/2017/10/29/perincekten-hizmete-yonelik-soykirim-itirafi-suclu-olmalarina-gerek-yok-hepsini-temizlemeliyiz/>

24] “Ultranationalist Columnist Says Turkey Must Get Rid Of Gülen Followers, Hints At Mass Burning”, SCF, 11 September 2017, <https://stockholmcf.org/ultranationalist-columnist-says-turkey-must-get-rid-of-gulen-followers-hints-at-mass-burning/>

25] Some anti-Gülen people call followers of Fethullah Gülen ‘Fethullahist,’ a demeaning and derogatory term to refer movement members.

26] The Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF) believes that the 15 July coup attempt was designed to fail from the start and that it was a false flag operation orchestrated by Erdoğan to consolidate more power. For more information see SCF’s report titled ‘July 15: Erdoğan’s Coup’ published in July 2017. http://stockholmcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/15_July_Erdogans_Coup_13.07.2017.pdf

to support his claim. He described the military attempt as “major blessing from God” and intensified the crackdown and purge he had launched two years earlier. “Thank God with this coup attempt we now have the ability and opportunity to do things that we would not have been able to do in normal times,”²⁷ Erdoğan was quoted as saying. A year later Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım admitted accusing the movement at the time without any evidence. “I made up my mind on my own. I consulted, talked to our president, and we agreed that it was an insurrection by FETÖ²⁸ members in the military. ... At the time, it could have been right or wrong.”²⁹

According to Ministry of Justice statistics at the time of writing, legal action has been initiated against 169,013 people in total, mostly in the form of detention.³⁰ Some 50,100 of them have been formally arrested pending trial. Among those imprisoned are thousands of teachers, academics, businesspeople, journalists, doctors, civil society workers, lawyers and human rights defenders. More than 17,000 of them are women.³¹ Moreover, detention warrants are outstanding for 8,087 people who remain at large in Turkey or have fled abroad.³²

The Erdoğan government has continued to rule Turkey under emergency powers that have been extended six times since the failed coup, with government decree-laws effectively sidelining the Turkish Parliament in passing legislation.

According to data provided by Turkish Minister Numan Kurtulmuş on July 17, 2017, 111,240 civil servants had been dismissed under these decree-laws without any administrative or judicial investigation.³³ Kurtulmuş also said 966 companies in 43

27] “Erdoğan: OHAL ile normal zamanlarda yapamayacağımız şeyleri yapabilme gücüne sahip olduk!” (Erdoğan: Thank God with this coup attempt we now have the ability and opportunity to do things that we would not have been able to do in normal times) t24.com, 22 September 2016, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/erdogan-normal-zamanlarda-yapamayacagimiz-seyleri-yapabilme-gucune-sahip-olduk,361194>

28] FETÖ is an acronym for the concept of “Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü,” which the AKP government invented when it launched a witch-hunt against the Gülen movement.

29] “Başbakana MİT söylemediyse kim söyledi darbeyi?” (If it is not MİT, who reported the coup to the Prime Minister?) Murat Yetkin, Hürriyet, 19 July 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/murat-yetkin/basbakana-mit-soylemediyse-kim-soyledi-darbeyi-40524357>

30] “FETÖ soruşturmalarında 169 bin 13 şüpheli hakkında işlem yapıldı” (Judicial process started against 169,013 suspects for FETÖ investigations), Anadolu Ajansı, 13 July 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/feto-sorusturmalarinda-169-bin-13-supheli-hakkinda-islem-yapildi/860654>

31] SCF’s report titled “Jailing Women In Turkey: Systematic Campaign of Persecution and Fear”, April 2017, <http://stockholmcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Jailing-women-in-Turkey.pdf>

32] “FETÖ soruşturmalarında 169 bin 13 şüpheli hakkında işlem yapıldı” (Judicial process started against 169,013 suspects for FETÖ investigations), Anadolu Ajansı, 13 July 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/feto-sorusturmalarinda-169-bin-13-supheli-hakkinda-islem-yapildi/860654>

33] “Hükümet Sözcüsü: KHK’lar ile 111 bin 240 kişi ihraç edildi, OHAL Komisyonu ilk gününde 3 binden fazla başvuru aldı” (Government Spokesperson: 111,240 civil servants have been dismissed with these decrees; on the first day of State of Emergency Commission operations, more than 3,000 applications were received), t24.com, 17 July 2017, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/hukümet-sozcusu-khklar-ile-111-bin-240-kisi-ihrac-edildi-ohal-komisyonu-ilk-gununde-3-binden-fazla-basvuru-aldi,414870>

cities had been seized.³⁴ A report issued by the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) confirmed these data.³⁵ According to the report, the teaching licenses of 33,000 teachers from the public sector and 21,000 from the private sector were cancelled. A total of 11,301 teachers were laid off on accusations of supporting a terrorist organization; 9,843 of these teachers were members of the Egitim-Sen union under the Confederation of Public Sector Trade Unions (KESK). Thus, the purge was not limited to the Gülen movement and but had escalated to include other critical groups as well.

Again, according to the report written by the CHP, 6,383 academics and 1,200 university personnel have been dismissed by decree. Twenty-six of the academics returned to their jobs. Moreover, 5,295 academics became unemployed because a number of universities were shut down. A total of 1,424 educational organizations including 1,064 schools were closed down in the private sector.³⁶

In total 4,238 judges and public prosecutors were dismissed, two-thirds of them right after the coup attempt.³⁷ Their salaries and bank accounts were frozen; their licenses were cancelled. Efkân Ala, the then-interior minister, revealed that since December 2013, 35,000 police officers had been fired.³⁸ More than 10,000 military personnel were dismissed as well.³⁹

The witch-hunt is not limited to arrests and purges. Torture and ill treatment in detention and prisons have become widespread, systematic and deliberate to stoke further fears in Turkish society. Images and videos of torture from police stations, prisons and black sites used as unofficial detention centers were circulated after the July 15 events by official state news agency AA and pro-government social media accounts. Thousands of people fled Turkey for fear of arrest and torture, while thousands could not leave because the government had cancelled the passports of well over 100,000 people and had imposed a travel ban on scores more. Many had to resort to illegal migration routes to escape persecution in Turkey.

34] "966 şirkete el konuldu" (966 companies are seized), CNN Türk, 17 July 2017, <https://www.cnnturk.com/video/turkiye/kurtulmus-966-baglantili-sirkete-el-konuldu>

35] "CHP'den 1. yılında OHAL raporu: 50 bin tutuklu, 111 bin ihraç" (CHP's Report at the first year of coup: 50,000 people were arrested), Cumhuriyet, 20 July 2017, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/785737/CHP_den_1_yilinda_OHAL_raporu_50_bin_tutuklu_111_bin_ihrac.html

36] 15 Temmuz sonrasında, hangi kurum ne oranda FETÖ mensubunu ihraç etti (How many civil servants are dismissed in which institution after July 15), memurlar.net, 18.10.2017 <http://www.memurlar.net/haber/640039/>

37] "15 Temmuz'dan sonra 4 bin 238 hakim ve savcı ihraç edildi" (4,238 judges and public prosecutors were dismissed after July 15), Milliyet, 11 May 2017, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/15-temmuz-dan-sonra-4-bin-238-gundem-2448679/>

38] TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu tutanakları, (Reports of Turkish Parliament Council for July 15) 18.10.2016, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1743

39] "FETÖ Tutuklu Sayısı! Kaç Asker Kaç Sivil Var" (Number of the people arrested from FETÖ! How many military personnel and civilians there are), Milliyet, 6 May 2017, <https://www.haber24.com/gundem/feto-tutuklu-sayisi-kac-asker-kac-sivil-var-h621178.html>



**The Embassy
of the
Republic
of Turkey in
Stockholm.**

source:
google street view

5. Erdoğan's Long Arm in Sweden

“These people’s blood is too dirty! I became more aware when I watched the news that these FETÖ dogs are worse than people who serve the USA, Esad and Sisi.”

These words were uttered by an imam at a Turkish mosque in Sweden.⁴⁰ The statement, mentioned in a report by Radio Sweden (EKOT), does not reflect the views of one imam only. According to the news, another Turkish imam in Sweden said: “If you want to be citizens of this country [Turkey], you cannot position yourself above the state. Otherwise, you will go splat like a mosquito.”

EKOT reporters were in Turkey after the July 15 coup attempt. They observed Friday prayers in one of the country’s southern cities and wrote their impressions.⁴¹ “On that day there were many more people than normal, and the atmosphere was very intense. According to the imam delivering the sermon, it was clear that foreign powers were aiming to turn off [the sound of] adhan [Islamic call to prayer], take down the Turkish flag and divide the country. And the foreign powers under the leadership of the United States, which is defined as the big evil, for decades trained traitors who seem like a religious group to seize the country.”

Radio Sweden stated: “The words quoted refer to the imam of the Gülen movement. In reality, the Gülen movement was an ally of Erdoğan and the AKP. But now it is the AKP’s foe, and the story is being rewritten. It is said now that the Gülen movement is supported by the US.” The report continues by quoting the imam’s sermon at Friday prayer: “May my Allah make them taste their loss soon!

40] “Hela reportaget: Erdogans långa arm”, Sveriges Radio, 28 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6661137>

41] “Hela reportaget: Erdogans långa arm”, Sveriges Radio, 28 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6661137>

The hate speech and crimes targeting the Gülen movement via Erdoğan's long arm in Sweden was well covered by the Swedish media. It revealed how Erdoğan instrumentalized religion as the main medium when he was establishing his authoritarian regime.

Swedish journalist Daniel Öhman said: "Religion became one of the main instruments for Erdoğan to reach his goal. There are approximately 90,000 mosques in the country, and the minarets are calling for Turkish people to support Erdoğan."⁴² An analysis by Nathan Shachar from another well-known Swedish newspaper, Dagens Nyheter, defines Erdoğan's goal as "being a national semi-god."⁴³

5.1. Turkish Community in Sweden

So far there have been no violent incidents reported in Sweden in which dissident Turks faced physical attack that could be traced to the Turkish government or its operatives. This may be partially attributed to the Swedish government's clear stand on the vulnerable Gülen movement, its opposition to importing divisions from Turkey and its democratic culture and demographic composition, among other factors. Most fall in the category of hate speech, sometimes amounting to hate crime that can mainly be seen in on social media. In some cases, supporters of the Turkish government threaten the lives of dissidents or the lives of their family members and assets back in Turkey.

According to unofficial numbers, nearly 120,000 Turks live in Sweden.⁴⁴ Almost half of this population is from the town of Kulu in the conservative province of Konya, known as an AKP stronghold.⁴⁵ The Turkish community started to grow in Sweden in the 1960s with labor migration from Turkey to Europe. Turks are the least educated group among migrants in Sweden, according to former Turkish Ambassador to Sweden Zergün Korutürk.⁴⁶

42] "Hela reportaget: Erdogans långa arm", Sveriges Radio, 28 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6661137>

43] "Erdogan siktar in sig på status som nationell halvgud", Dagens Nyheter, 15 April 2017, <http://www.dn.se/arkiv/varlden/erdogan-siktar-in-sig-pa-status-som-nationell-halvgud/>

44] Kulu-İsveç Fahri Konsolosu Doç. Dr. Erdal Akdeve, "Kulu, Türkiye için model", Konya Yenigün, 5 Kasım 2014, <http://www.konyayenigun.com/roportaj/kulu-turkiye-icin-model-h91200.html>

45] "Kulu'da İsveç seçim sandığı", Al-Jazeera Türk, 28 Ağustos 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/kulu-da-isvec-secim-sandigi>

46] Türkiye'nin eski Stockholm büyükelçisi Zergün Korutürk, "Büyükelçi Zergün Korutürk, İsveç'teki Türkiye'nin profilini anlattı", strf.se, <http://www.strf.se/index.php/samhalle-politik/581-bueyuekelci-zerguen-korutuerk-svecteki-tuerklerin-profilini-anlatt.html>



With the Turkish government's deliberate and systematic policy of exporting home-front divisions abroad, the diaspora community in Sweden has been sharply divided between pro-Erdoğan supporters and those who oppose his policies. Most from Kulu fall within the first category, while leftists, socialists, many Kurds and the Gülen movement have adopted a critical stance towards the current Turkish government. The immigrant community of Syriacs, Assyrians, Nestorians and others who have faced trouble in Turkey continue to harbor grievances as well.

Sweden has become a sanctuary for many Turkish dissidents from all walks of life. It is estimated that the number of political refugees who came to Sweden after the September 12, 1980 coup is between 10,000 and 15,000 including their families.⁴⁷ Because of the strong presence of dissident groups in Swedish society and politics, the AKP regime was unable to utilize its long arm as freely in Sweden as in other European countries like Germany, the Netherlands and Austria, putting Erdoğan sympathizers at a disadvantage. The Turkish government tries to compensate for that weakness by using the vast resources and support of the Turkish state such as the covert activities of MIT, embassy networks, government-supported clergy and pro-Erdoğan groups such as the UETD.

In total, there are 37,600 eligible Turkish voters in Sweden. According to the Supreme Election Board (YSK) 15,218 of these voters are from Konya. In the last general elections, on November 1, 2015, 12,588 people voted, and 5,200 of the votes were in favor of the AKP.⁴⁸ In the referendum of April 16, 2017, 53 percent voted against the constitutional amendments, whereas 47 percent voted in favor.⁴⁹ Roughly 50 percent of Turks in Sweden support Erdoğan's policies. If it is considered that in Germany 63 percent voted for the amendments,⁵⁰ in Belgium 75 percent,⁵¹ in Austria 73 percent,⁵² in the Netherlands 71 percent⁵³ and in France 65 percent,⁵⁴ then the election results in Sweden show the political and demographic differences in the Turkish diaspora community.

47] "Göç ve İsveç Türkleri", Mustafa Sönmez, İsveç Postası, 18 Mart 2015, <http://www.isvecpostasi.com/kose-yazisi/373/goc-ve-isvec-turkleri.html>

48] UETD Başkanı Özer Eken,

49] Türkiye Gazetesi, <http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/2017-referandum-sonuclari/isvec-ulke-referandum-sonuclari>

50] <http://www.turkiyegazetesi.de/Germany-referandum-sonuclari-2017-Germany-secim-sonuclari/>

51] <http://www.turkiyegazetesi.de/belcika-referandum-sonuclari-2017-belcika-secim-sonuclari-canli/>

52] <http://www.turkiyegazetesi.de/avusturya-referandum-sonuclari-2017-avusturya-secim-sonuclari-canli/>

53] <http://www.turkiyegazetesi.de/the-Netherlands-referandum-sonuclari-2017-the-Netherlands-secim-sonuclari-canli/>

54] <http://www.turkiyegazetesi.de/fransa-referandum-sonuclari-2017-fransa-secim-sonuclari/>

5.2. **The Gülen Movement in Sweden**

The Gülen movement had supported the AKP until at least 2010, when Erdoğan was leading a series of political, legal and economic reforms in line with expectations from Turkey's European Union candidacy, especially during the AKP's first term in government between 2002 and 2007. Ankara's relations with the Council of Europe also came under pressure when the council adopted a more critical line with the government when the AKP reneged on its campaign promises of reform, primarily a vow to deliver a civil and liberal constitution.

In June 2010 Mr. Gülen blamed the Erdoğan government for endorsing a Gaza-bound humanitarian aid flotilla that was organized by the radical IHH, which was accused at the United Nations Security Council of shipping arms and ammunition to jihadists in Syria. The Turkish government cleared the ship to depart port in Antalya. The activists aboard the ship clashed with raiding troops from the Israeli army in international waters when they defied a unilateral blockade in place, leading to the death of eight Turkish citizens and one Turkish-American. Gülen criticized the flotilla for trying to deliver aid without Israel's consent and causing the loss of lives.⁵⁵

The movement was also critical of the AKP government in the aftermath of the 2011 elections when Erdoğan shelved his main campaign promise of drafting a brand-new constitution in line with recommendations from the Council of Europe's Venice Commission. The matter was passed to an ad hoc parliamentary commission that was set up to fail due to rules and procedures. In February 2012, when the prosecutors wanted to investigate criminal elements within Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) after they discovered that some bombings and terrorist attacks in Turkey had been either directed or facilitated by intelligence agents, Erdoğan accused the Gülen movement of going after his confidante Hakan Fidan, an Islamist who was appointed to head the agency. Gülen's criticism of Erdoğan for his violent suppression of anti-government protests in the summer of 2013 during the Gezi Park events widened the rift.

The movement and the AKP had completely fallen out when twin corruption investigations in December 2013 incriminated Erdoğan, his ministers, family members and political and business associates. Erdoğan, who was prime minister at the time, blamed the probes on investigators and prosecutors attached to the Gülen movement, described the investigations as a coup attempt and declared total war on the movement by starting to sack many police chiefs and members of the judiciary. He openly announced a witch-hunt targeting all participants of the movement. The failed coup⁵⁶ of July 15, 2016, which was orchestrated by Erdoğan and his military

55] "Reclusive Turkish Imam Criticizes Gaza Flotilla", Wall Street Journal, 4 June 2010, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704025304575284721280274694>

56] Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF) issued a report in 2017 stating that the July 15 coup attempt was designed to fail as a self-coup by Erdoğan to consolidate his power. For more information see SCF's report titled 'July 15: Erdoğan's Coup' published on July 2017. http://stockholmcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/15_July_Erdogans_Coup_13.07.2017.pdf



Gaza- bound humanitarian aid flotille that was organized by the radical IHH, which was accused at the United Nations Security Council of shipping arms and ammunition to jihadists in Syria.

and intelligence chiefs as a false flag to justify the mass persecution of opposition, created a perfect pretext for the AKP government to detain some 150,000 people and formally arrest 60,000 within the space of around a year. The Turkish president immediately described the coup as “A great favor done by Allah”⁵⁷ and used that to launch mass dismissals from the government. “Thank God, with this coup attempt we now have the ability and opportunity to do things that we would not be able to do in normal times,” he said.⁵⁸ A state of emergency was declared on July 20, 2016 that enabled Erdoğan to sideline Parliament, suspend rights and freedoms and rule the country by executive decrees with the force of law.

Before Erdoğan started adopting a hateful and vilifying narrative targeting Gülen, the movement in Sweden enjoyed the support of much of the diaspora and had good relations with Turkish authorities including the embassy in Stockholm. The Turkish Embassy in Sweden used to encourage the Gülen movement’s cultural and educational events as well as business networks. Official representatives from the embassy used to participate in these events as well. Likewise, the embassy used to

57] Erdoğan İstanbul’da açıklama yaptı (Erdoğan Made a Press Statement), Deutsche Welle Türkçe, 16.07.2016. <http://www.dw.com/tr/erdo%C4%9Fan-istanbulda-a%C4%7Fıklama-yaptı/a-19403922>

58] “Erdoğan: OHAL ile normal zamanlarda yapamayacağımız şeyleri yapabilme gücüne sahip olduk!” (Erdoğan: Thank God with this coup attempt now we have the ability and opportunity to do things that we would not be able to do in normal times) t24.com, 22 September 2016, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/erdogan-normal-zamanlarda-yapamayacagimiz-seyleri-yapabilme-gucune-sahip- olduk,361194>

invite members and organizations of the movement to the events it sponsored.

Members of Parliament from the AKP government used to attend events the organizations close to the movement held in Sweden. One of these events was the International Festival of Language and Culture (IFLC)⁵⁹. In 2012, AKP deputies Belma Satır and Ayşe Türkmenoğlu, who are members of the Turkish Parliament's Sweden-Turkey Friendship Group, and Adnan Keskin from the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) attended this event. Moreover, the then-general secretary of the AKP, Haluk İpek, and then-deputy chairman of the AKP Hüseyin Tanrıverdi attended the festival as well.⁶⁰ Again in 2013, a reception in Stockholm hosted by the Selma Women's and Business Association (Föreningen Selma), an organization linked to the Gülen movement, was attended by a few MPs from the AKP, including deputy leader of the Turkish Parliament's Sweden-Turkey Friendship Group AKP MP Ayşe Türkmenoğlu and Mustafa Baloğlu, an AKP deputy from Konya.⁶¹ In addition, both deputies delivered speeches at the event.

Kaya Türkmen was appointed Turkey's ambassador to Sweden in the summer of 2013. Before November 23, when he presented his credentials to King Carl XVI Gustaf,⁶² the movement-affiliated SWETURK Federation (Swedish Turkish Business Federation) paid him a courtesy call on November 10.⁶³ During the visit Türkmen said, "We can benefit a lot from each other to do good things on behalf of our country." Türkmen also said the embassy was ready to support SWETURK in any way necessary. Twelve days later, Ambassador Türkmen attended SWETURK's Eid reception and delivered a speech there.⁶⁴

5.3. The Movement Comes Under Fire

When major corruption investigations were made public in December 2013 that exposed an unprecedented graft scheme involving Erdoğan and his family, the movement took a critical stand against the AKP government and demanded the

59] IFLC is an international annual festival organized for 15 years with the participation of schools linked to the Hizmet Movement around the world. Children from different countries, racial background and languages come together and give messages of 'plurality, dialog, tolerance, peace and brotherhood' to the world. The festival includes performances of poems, songs and folkloric dances. The 15th festival was held in 2017.

60] "Mahmut Övür yazdı; CHP cemaate yeşil ışık mı yakıyor", haberisvec.net, 9 Mayıs 2012, <http://www.haberisvec.net/haber/1755-gundem-mahmut-ovur-yazdi-chp-cemaate-yesil-istik-mi-yakiyo.html>

61] "Selma İş ve Kadın Derneği, Konya milletvekillerini konuk etti", haberisvec.net, 17 Nisan 2013, <http://www.haberisvec.net/haber/3696-gundem-selma-is-ve-kadin-dernegi-konya-milletvekillerini-.html>

62] "Türkiye Stockholm Büyükelçisi Kaya Türkmen, Krala Güven Mektubu'nu sundu", İsveç Postası, 23 Ekim 2013, <http://www.isvecpostasi.com/turkiye-stockholm-buyukelcisi-kaya-turkmen-krala-guven-mektubunu-sundu-h376.html>

63] "SweTurk Federasyonu'ndan yeni Büyükelçi Türkmen'e nezaket ziyareti", Haber İsveç, 10 Ekim 2013, <http://www.haberisvec.net/haber/4770-isvecte-turk-is-dunyasi-sweturk-federasyonundan-yeni-buyukelci-turkmene-ne.html>

64] "SWETURK bayram resepsiyonu buluşturdu", Haber İsveç, 19 Ekim 2013, <http://www.haberisvec.net/haber/4835-isvecte-turk-is-dunyasi-sweturk-bayram-resepsiyonu-bulusturdu.html>

accountability of officials and the resignation of ministers involved in the dragnet. Instead of holding those involved in corruption accountable, then-Prime Minister Erdoğan blamed the Gülen movement for the corruption investigations the Istanbul financial crimes unit had carried out under orders from prosecutors. He labeled the movement as a “parallel structure” and described the corruption investigations as a plot against his government engineered by this structure. Despite the overwhelming incriminating evidence of the investigations including court-authorized wiretap records, physical surveillance footage, confessions, safe boxes and shoe boxes in which millions of euros were stashed, Erdoğan turned to propaganda by saying that these were not corruption investigations but an attempted “judicial coup” against his government.

Erdoğan started a witch-hunt against the movement targeting the police, members of the judiciary and other state officials who were alleged to be sympathizers of the movement. In addition to the purge of state officers, the process of detaining and arresting people, the raiding of schools affiliated with the movement and the seizure of companies by appointing trustees to their administration was started. The reflection of this witch-hunt among diaspora communities abroad was not strong at the beginning. That changed dramatically when Erdoğan accused the movement of perpetrating the failed coup of July 15, 2016 without any evidence while the coup attempt was still ongoing.

In spite of this, the witch-hunt period of Turkish history started on the morning of July 16, 2016. According to statistics from the Ministry of Justice at the time of writing, judicial proceedings were initiated against 169,013 people.⁶⁵ A total of 50,100 of them were arrested. Among those in pretrial detention are 169 generals, 7,098 colonels and lower-ranking military members, 8,815 members of the police force, 24 governors, 73 deputy governors, 116 district governors and 2,431 members of the judiciary. The remaining 31,784 are teachers, academics, students, businesspeople, journalists, doctors, members of civil society and housewives. More than 17,000 of them are women.⁶⁶ Moreover, arrest warrants are outstanding for 8,087 people.⁶⁷

The witch-hunt did not remain within the borders of Turkey. Attacks against people and associations close to the Gülen movement abroad began on July 16. These attacks are carried out by organizations associated with the long arm of Erdoğan and encouraged by embassies and consulates. In addition to negative campaigns such as profiling, harassment, threats, boycotts, insults, slander, informing on people, social

65] “FETÖ soruşturmasında 169 bin 13 şüpheli hakkında işlem yapıldı” (Judicial process started against 169,13 suspects for FETÖ investigations), Anadolu Ajansı, 13 July 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/feto-sorusturmalarinda-169-bin-13-supheli-hakkinda-islem-yapildi/860654>

66] SCF’s report titled “Jailing Women In Turkey: Systematic Campaign of Persecution and Fear”, April 2017, <http://stockholmcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Jailing-women-in-Turkey.pdf>

67] “FETÖ soruşturmasında 169 bin 13 şüpheli hakkında işlem yapıldı” (Judicial process started against 169,13 suspects for FETÖ investigations), Anadolu Ajansı, 13 July 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/feto-sorusturmalarinda-169-bin-13-supheli-hakkinda-islem-yapildi/860654>



Havva Demir who works as translator in Malmö called for a boycott of brands that are claimed to be linked to the Gülen movement. The Pope's face was replaced with Gülen's in a photoshopped image.

the functions of diplomatic missions as defined in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations: “Protecting in the receiving State the interests of the sending State and of its nationals, within the limits permitted by international law.” However, by means of its diplomatic missions, the Republic of Turkey is targeting a social group whose members are Turkish citizens by harassing them, limiting their right to live normal lives, making it a struggle to survive and putting them in harm’s way. Again, according to the Vienna Convention, diplomatic missions must respect the laws of the host countries and not intervene in their domestic affairs. Despite this, Turkish diplomatic missions in many countries are accused of intervening in the domestic politics of their respective countries and being involved in activities that do not comport with diplomatic courtesy.

Movement-affiliated people in Sweden are treated like terrorists by the embassy. They are profiled, oppressed and threatened. Former Turkish Ambassador to Sweden Kaya Türkmen, who was replaced by Hakkı Emre Yunt in July 2017, did not hesitate to confirm these activities.

The polarization among the Turkish community has deepened in Sweden like every other country in Europe and around the world. Harassment, threats and intimidation campaigns against participants of the movement have started to be felt in Sweden as well.

5.4. Swedish Government’s Reaction to Mass Arrests

In line with its principled stand, the Swedish government declared its support for the Turkish government after the coup attempt but did not shy away from expressing

exclusion and isolation, physical attacks such as arson attempts, stonings and beatings occurred in some European countries. Turkish embassies and consulates, which used to support the movement as sort of a soft power influence, turned into the main command center of the “hate campaign beyond the borders.”

Similar things happened in Sweden as well. Diplomats working in the embassy in Stockholm turned into hunters of movement members, and sympathizers. They became involved in activities that contravene

its concern on the direction of the country. Minister of Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström told Swedish news agency TT that “military coups to solve political problems are nothing the EU group advocates,» adding, “The coup can strengthen President Erdogan’s hand and lead to him changing the constitution and further limiting freedom of expression.”⁶⁸ Developments such as the mass arrest of judges, teachers, academics, journalists and others proved her right. She said on July 18, 2016 that “The rule of law has to be protected in the country, there is no excuse for any steps that take the country away from that.”⁶⁹ Anne Linde, Sweden’s minister for European Union affairs, also reiterated the significance of democracy in Turkey. “Relieved that the military coup failed in Turkey, loss of lives tragic. Now the rule of law & democracy must be safeguarded in the country,” she tweeted.⁷⁰

On July 22, 2016 the Swedish government issued a statement saying that “in response to the attempted coup, the Turkish Government is undertaking an extensive purge, removing soldiers, police officers and state employees. Certain figures indicate that more than 60 000 people have been arrested, suspended or forced to leave their positions. The Government takes a serious view of these developments.”⁷¹ The statement underlined that “it is crucial in the wake of the attempted coup that democratic order is maintained and that the principles of the rule of law and human rights are respected.”

Delivering comments on Turkey at the end of July 2016, Wallström expressed her concerns on developments in Turkey and stated that Turkey was moving in the wrong direction. She asked for respect for international conventions and human rights and said freedom of the media and freedom of speech are crucially important in democratic countries.⁷² The Swedish government officially announced its policy with respect to Turkey in February 2017 during a parliamentary debate. Wallström said: “Cooperation with Turkey remains strategically important for the EU, but developments in the country in terms of human rights, respect for the rule of law, and the situation of the opposition and the media are deeply worrying. The peace process to resolve the Kurdish issue must be resumed. This would contribute to peace and security both in Turkey and regionally.”⁷³

68] “Swedish foreign minister condemns coup attempt in Turkey”, Sveriges Radio, 16 July 2016, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6476712>

69] “Sweden to push human rights as EU talks Turkey”, Sveriges Radio, 18 July 2016, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6477168>

70] Ibid.

71] “Government statement on the events in Turkey”, 22 July 2016, <http://www.government.se/articles/2016/07/government-statement-on-the-events-in-turkey/>

72] “İsveç Dışişleri Bakanı: Türkiye yanlış yolda”, Cumhuriyet, 31 Temmuz 2016, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/dunya/577053/isvec_Disisleri_Bakani__Türkiye_yanlis_yolda.html

73] “Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs 2017”, 15 February 2017, <http://www.government.se/statements/2017/03/statement-of-government-policy-in-the-parliamentary-debate-on-foreign-affairs-2017/>

5.5. Swedish Migration Board Describes the Movement as a Risk Group

Facing an unprecedented witch-hunt and persecution at home, many members of the Gülen movement were compelled to flee Turkey. Some ended up in Sweden and sought political asylum, fearing torture, ill treatment and wrongful imprisonment back home. Sweden officially declared that the group fell within risk groups and decided it would not send Gülen sympathizers to who sought asylum in Sweden back to Turkey.⁷⁴

On August 3, 2016 the Swedish migration agency, Migrationsverket, issued a press release stating that the Migration Board “has decided not to send back asylum seekers with links to the opposition to Turkey,”⁷⁵ citing the need for more information about Turkey in the face of recent political and security developments. It described followers of the Gülen movement as one of the risk groups along with “persons with credible opposition political activities” as well as those being tried for alleged coup involvement.

“Asylum matters concerning these persons cannot be settled until further notice, since the Swedish Migration Board estimates that further information is needed about the current situation in the country. In order to carry out enforcement decisions, i.e., to ensure that people with a decision returning them to Turkey do so, the Swedish Migration Board needs more information on political and security developments in Turkey. Open return issues are therefore postponed until further notice,” the statement said, referring to the board’s July 18, 2016 decision.

By November 2016, Radio Sweden reported that 531 people from Turkey had applied for asylum in Sweden, twice as many as the entire previous year. “We believe the increase is due to the uncertain situation in Turkey after the failed coup attempt in the middle of July of this year,” Carl Bexelius, deputy head of legal affairs at the migration agency, told Radio Sweden.⁷⁶

5.6. ‘Hotline’ is on Swedish Media

As part of the witch-hunt the AKP regime launched both in Turkey and abroad in the summer of 2016, the Turkish presidency set up a hotline for reporting on critics, especially members and sympathizers or anybody who had come in contact with the Gülen movement in one way or another. Special phone numbers and email contacts

74] “Sweden won’t return people linked to failed Turkey coup”, AP News, 3 August 2016, <https://apnews.com/2fab4f0c-520b4119af06410984c63f56/sweden-wont-return-people-linked-failed-turkey-coup>

75] ”Ställningstagande om situationen i Turkiet”, Migrationsverket, <http://www.mynewsdesk.com/se/migrationsverket/pressreleases/staellningstagande-om-situationen-i-turkiet-1535632>

76] “An increasing number of Turkish citizens are applying for asylum in Sweden”, 30 November 2016, Sveriges Radio, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6576566>

tioned to the police, Interior Ministry and offices of the prime minister and president are provided for reporting such people. These contact details are publicized abroad as well via embassies, pro-Erdogan NGOs and AKP partisan media organizations. It is presented as a patriotic and civic duty to spy on critics and dissidents who live among diaspora groups.

An investigative team from Radio Sweden reported on the issue on July 22, 2016.⁷⁷ The report, titled “Turkey trying to track down Gülen supporters in Sweden,” stated that the Turkish government had set up a hotline. On a Facebook page for supporters of the AKP in Sweden is a post that encourages individuals to report anyone associated with the movement, including a phone number to call.



A Radio Sweden reporter called the number to see how the hotline worked, and it rang through to Turkey’s presidential office. The person on the other end confirmed that they were interested in any details about Gülen sympathizers in Sweden including personal data and addresses. The reporter asked who was in charge of this initiative, and the response was: “The president. The state.”⁷⁸ The phone conversation between the reporter and the officer at the Turkish presidency went as follows:

“We say we have information about the Gülen movement in Sweden that we want to hand over and ask how we can do this. ‘Do you want to report something about the movement?’ says a man on the other end. We answer that we have something and ask how we can do this. ‘You can leave it with our embassy,’ says the man. We ask if we can trust the embassy. ‘If you do not trust the embassy, you can fax or send

it directly to the presidency. The address goes directly to the Erdogan Presidential Palace in Ankara.”⁷⁹

5.7. Professor Bring: This Could Qualify as Espionage

EKOT was investigating whether this campaign of informing on others, which

77] “Turkey trying to track down Gülen supporters in Sweden”, Sveriges Radio, 22 July 2016, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6480045>

78] “Turkey trying to track down Gülen supporters in Sweden”, Sveriges Radio, 22 July 2016, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6480045>

79] “Hela reportaget: Erdogans långa arm”, Sveriges Radio, 28 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6661137>

Ülkü Ünver, a Turk living in Sweden, shares Turkish government hot line to report about members of the Gülen movement.

included Sweden, was legal, during which it interviewed experts. Professor of international law Ove Bring from Stockholm University said these types of intelligence activities could be illegal and could qualify as espionage against refugees. Bring emphasized that Sweden has the ability to push back on Turkey. He suggested that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs summon the Turkish ambassador to have a serious conversation about this and say that it is not appropriate. Bring also underlined that Sweden is not the only country that is vulnerable to this. There are probably many countries in Europe and maybe elsewhere in which the same acts of espionage are being carried out.⁸⁰

5.8. Turkish Ambassador: This Is Natural for Turkey

An EKOT reporter contacted the Turkish Embassy to obtain more information. Ambassador Türkmen defended the hotline and said, “It’s natural that Turkey wants tips about Gülen supporters in Sweden.”⁸¹

“I personally find it only natural that the Turkish state is of course interested in such activities if they are in Sweden,” Türkmen said. He said he did not believe Turkey was violating Swedish law. “I don’t think Sweden has laws that would prevent Turkey from gathering information on the activities of an organization that is trying to topple the government in Turkey,” he said. “Every state has the right to collect information on activities that are directed against it even if it’s on individuals living in Sweden.”⁸²

Kaya was reassigned to headquarters by a Cabinet decision on September 22, 2017 and replaced by Hakkı Emre Yunt, who was director general for Multilateral Economic Affairs at the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

The unlawful profiling and illegal spying were personally encouraged by President Erdoğan on many occasions. For example, during a speech on August 10, 2016 he called on Turkish citizens to report every Gülen sympathizer they knew.⁸³ “You might have friends among this community. I am asking you to expose them. You need to report them to the prosecutor. That is the duty of patriots. The intelligence service may not know everyone, and the police may not know or [be able to] reach

80] “Turkey trying to track down Gülen supporters in Sweden”, Sveriges Radio, 22 July 2016, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6480045>

81] “Turkish ambassador: It’s natural that Turkey wants tips about Gülen supporters in Sweden”, Sveriges Radio, 22 July 2016, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6480126>

82] “Turkish ambassador: It’s natural that Turkey wants tips about Gülen supporters in Sweden”, Sveriges Radio, 22 July 2016, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6480126>

83] “Erdoğan’dan FETÖ’cülerini ihbar edin çağrısı”, ensonhaber.com, 10 Ağustos 2016, <http://www.ensonhaber.com/erdogandan-fetoculeri-ihbar-edin-cagrisi-2016-08-10.html>

everyone. Look, they are escaping.”⁸⁴

He tried to justify the persecution by saying: “We are not allowed to show mercy to those who are not merciful to their country and nation. I always say this -- being merciful to cruel people is persecution of oppressed people, and it is unfair.”⁸⁵ In a speech on August 28, 2016 in Gaziantep he said: “I am calling on our citizens -- if you know anyone who follows these charlatans, report them to the police or prosecutors, and we will do what is necessary. If Parliament votes to reinstate the death penalty, as president I will approve it.”⁸⁶

6. How the Long Arm of Erdoğan Operates in Sweden

6.1. Embassy

Among the main perpetrators of nefarious activities such as profiling, espionage and vicious hate campaigns abroad are Turkish diplomatic missions, which were staffed by neo-nationalists and Islamist figures following a massive and unprecedented purge that dismissed some 30 percent of all Turkish diplomats overnight on dubious terrorism charges.⁸⁷ Those who do not agree with Erdoğan’s way of conducting diplomacy have remained quiet and are compelled to go along with it for fear of being dismissed or even jailed on fabricated charges.

As a result, Turkish embassies and consulates have been transformed into bases for this witch-hunt against critics, opponents and dissidents. The primary job of diplomats is now to track people and organizations linked to the movement and organize events and meetings and give interviews to media outlets to defame members of the movement. The Turkish Foreign Ministry even keeps a tally of such events and discloses the figures on its web page. For example, the ministry boasted that Turkish missions had 13,935 high-level meetings, 3,273 interviews and 381 press events since July 2016.⁸⁸

84] “Erdoğan’dan FETÖ’cülerini ihbar edin çağrısı”, ensonhaber.com, 10 Ağustos 2016, <http://www.ensonhaber.com/erdogandan-fetoculeri-ihbar-edin-cagrisi-2016-08-10.html>

85] ““Ülkesine ve Milletine Acımayana Bizim Acıma Hakkımız Yoktur”, tccb.gov.tr, 10 Ağustos 2016, <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/410/49953/ulkesine-ve-milletine-acimayana-bizim-acima-hakkimiz-yoktur.html>

86] “Erdoğan: (FETÖ) Bildikleriniz varsa ihbar edin gerekeni yapalım”, Bloomberg HT, 28 Ağustos 2016, <http://www.bloomberght.com/haberler/haber/1912326-erdogan-feto-bildikleriniz-varsa-ihbar-edin-gerekeni-yapalim>

87] “Turkey’s Foreign Ministry Labels 394 Turkish Diplomats As Terrorists”, Abdullah Bozkurt, 22 May 2017, <https://stockholmcf.org/turkeys-foreign-ministry-labels-394-turkish-diplomats-as-terrorists/>

88] “Information About Steps Taken By Our Missions Abroad After The Coup Attempt”, Turkish Foreign Ministry, 18 January 2018, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/dis-temsilciliklerimizce-darbe-tesebbusu-sonrasi-yapilan-girisimlerin-sayilari_en.en.mfa

Of course, the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm is no different. These “hotlines” to report Gülen sympathizers are announced in Sweden as well by means of embassies as it is done throughout the world. AKP supporters are called on to report people close to the movement.

When he was first appointed in June 2013 as Turkish ambassador to Sweden, Türkmen did not hesitate to cooperate with various segments of the Turkish community in Sweden, including the Gülen movement. However, after the December 17-25, 2013 corruption investigations, the atmosphere started to change. Türkmen had to act in line with the official discourse and policies, especially after the coup attempt. He effectively admitted to tracking, profiling and reporting Gülen sympathizers and saw it is natural for Turkey to collect such data.

Türkmen made his first announcement to Radio Sweden on the issue a week after the coup attempt and said, “It’s natural that Turkey is gathering information about Fethullah Gülen supporters in Sweden.”⁸⁹

6.1.1 Turkish Ambassador Defends Profiling in Sweden

The campaign of informing on people that the ambassador had supported has continued nonstop in Sweden. Scandals involving the profiling and threatening of critics and dissidents were revealed in March 2017. The UETD, one of the institutions functioning as the long arm of Erdogan in Europe, was embroiled in the scandal. A voice recording of the UETD’s Sweden chairman, Özer Eken, was published in the Swedish media on March 28, 2017. Public broadcaster Radio Sweden shared a recorded phone conversation between Eken and a Turkish man identified only as “Murat” who was close to the Gülen movement.⁹⁰

According to the phone conversation, Eken suggests the person he is talking with engage in espionage and threatens him in the event he refuses to carry out the task. “I can tell you this, if you help the state, the state will help you. ... If you do not give us substantial information about Gülen supporters in Sweden, you will pay for it. ... Brother, your name is on the AKP’s list of dissidents. They [the AKP] want to know every one of their activities here. If you do not provide substantive information, you are finished. ... There is a risk of being arrested if you go to Turkey. You will be arrested; your wife will be arrested as well. They will take your wife hostage.”⁹¹

89] “Turkish ambassador: It’s natural that Turkey wants tips about Gülen supporters in Sweden”, Sveriges Radio, 22 July 2016, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6480126>

90] “Turkish government tracking down regime critics in Sweden”, Sverigesradio, 28 Mart 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6661315>

91] “Özer Eken ändrar sig om inspelning”, Sverigesradio, 29 Mart 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6662767>

**Kaya
Türkmen,
former
Turkish
ambassador
to Sweden.**



Eken refused to acknowledge he had such a threatening conversation with anybody and told the EKOT reporter, “I am not acting like part of the mafia, I do this job voluntarily.” When the record of his phone conversation with Murat was played, he denied it and said, “It is not me.”⁹² Eken later made a statement to the press the same day and admitted that he was the one in the phone conversation, but he claimed the conversation was recorded illegally and also montaged.

During his interview with Radio Sweden, in order to vindicate himself Eken said they were not profiling the Turkish community in Sweden, only those who came to Sweden after July 15. “According to official numbers 180 people came [here]. However, I know there are 400 people. I know they are staying in mosques and hotels. Four hundred people who live in Malmö, Stockholm and Göteborg did not apply for asylum. Some of them are hidden, high-profile people. They do not show themselves, they live in secrecy. ... We are identifying them.”

In order to hide his espionage for the Turkish state he said: “We identified these people. As we live in Sweden, we report it to the Swedish police. Sometimes, the police speak with us, and I tell them these people are staying in this country illegally. If I was living in Turkey, I would have reported them to the Turkish authorities.”⁹³

92] “Özer Eken ändrar sig om inspelning”, Sverigesradio, 29 Mart 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?program-id=83&artikel=6662767>

93] “UETD, Türkiye’den gelenleri İsveç polisine ihbar ediyormuş”, Evrensel, 29 Mart 2017, <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/313977/ueta-turkiyeden-gelenleri-isvec-polisine-ihbar-ediyormus>

One of the important details about the interview Eken did with Radio Sweden is that Eken calls all the supporters of the movement “terrorists.” After the EKOT reporter said, “Not all of them killed people,” Eken responded, “All of them aid and abet.”

Radio Sweden announced it was certain that it was Eken’s voice in the recording. They also reported that profiling and espionage activities are not limited to Eken. Some people who work for the Turkish state systematically report dissidents to the Turkish authorities.

The news report revealed Eken’s close relationship with Turkey’s Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım. A picture showing Eken sitting in the passenger seat while Yıldırım is in the back seat of a car was shared in the media. The report emphasized that they are close friends.⁹⁴

Moreover, Radio Sweden quoted Lisa Simonsson of the Swedish Security Service (Säkerhetspolisen) department working in counterintelligence as saying that foreign countries cannot profile people who have a certain political opinion in Sweden. This could be a crime and the illegal gathering of intelligence, she said. Simonsson underlined that the Security Service would be interested in people who gather intelligence on others.

According to Säkerhetspolisen’s website, which talks about detecting espionage targeting Swedish interests and preventing unlawful intelligence activities, more than 15 countries are currently involved in systematic, unlawful intelligence activities in and against Sweden or against Swedish interests abroad. “They typically seek to gather information on Swedish politics, economic issues, technology, science or defense, or on foreign citizens in Sweden,” Säkerhetspolisen said. “We are also well aware that some of these services engage in so-called refugee espionage by targeting dissidents who have sought refuge in our country,” it underlined.⁹⁵

Professor Ove Bring from Stockholm University said Eken’s threats and blackmail could be considered “espionage against refugees” and said it was against Swedish law. Bring also reminded that international laws are being violated as well, adding that sending spies to Sweden is a violation of Swedish law.

After the scandal was revealed, the Swedish media reacted and an explanation was requested from the Turkish ambassador. During the interview on March 28, 2017, Kaya Türkmen responded to Radio Sweden’s questions, defended the UETD and repeated the opinions he stated in July.⁹⁶ He claimed that it was natural to collect

94] “Özer Eken ändrar sig om inspelning”, Sverigesradio, 29 Mart 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6662767>

95] ” Counter-espionage”, Säkerhetspolisen, <http://www.sakerhetspolisen.se/en/swedish-security-service/counter-espionage.html>

96] “Turkiets ambassadör: Vi sysslar inte med spioneri”, Sveriges Radio, 28 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6661920> ; “Turkish Ambassador In Stockholm Slanders Swedish Schools As Terror Financiers”, stockholmsk.org, 30 March 2017, <https://stockholmcf.org/turkish-ambassador-in-stockholm-slanders-swedish-schools-as-terror-financiers/>

intelligence on movement sympathizers in Sweden and that it was not espionage. He differentiated information gathering from espionage. Türkmen even went further by branding private Swedish schools run by Turks who are seen as close to the movement as “terrorism hubs” and claimed they “finance terrorism.”

When he was told that “It is claimed that you gather information about private individuals and send this information to the Turkish government,” he said, “We are not interested in private individuals. The only thing we are interested in is the structural organization of the Gülen movement, their schools, their associations, also in this country.” The reporter confronted the ambassador as to how the embassy dealt with the structures without gathering intelligence on private individuals. The ambassador said: “As I said, this organization has some 2,000 schools all over the world. These schools are an important source of income for them, a source of income meaning terrorism financing.”

“Being involved in the Gülen movement in any way, you see that as criminal activity, right?” the reporter asked. Türkmen said: “We are not interested in private individuals. The only thing we are interested in is the structural organization of Fethullah Terrorist Organization in Sweden.”

The ambassador denied profiling and creating lists and said: “No, there is no such list. But if they are involved in any crime... No, not even on that list. We do not have any list.” When reminded that some people of Turkish origin were concerned, he said: “There is nothing to worry about unless they are involved in criminal activity. Do I worry about visiting Turkey? No.”⁹⁷

6.1.2. Swedish Foreign Minister Warned the Ambassador

After the recording of UETD Chairman Eken was revealed and the Turkish ambassador defended him, Minister of Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström contacted Türkmen over the claims of refugee espionage.⁹⁸ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced they had contacted Turkish Ambassador Kaya Türkmen by telephone and expressed their concerns about this issue and that it had been noted.

“This is clearly worrying information,” Wallström told news agency TT following Radio Sweden’s report of refugee espionage against Turkish citizens in Sweden. According to Sweden’s foreign minister, she had discussed similar information at a meeting with the Turkish ambassador almost a year earlier, which was now being

97] “Turkiets ambassadör: Vi sysslar inte med spioneri”, Sveriges Radio, 28 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6661920>

98] “Wallström contacts Turkish ambassador over refugee espionage claims”, Sveriges Radio, 28 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6661564>

followed up with a phone call to the embassy about the latest revelations. “We are following this matter closely,” she said.

Paul Levin, director of Stockholm University’s Institute for Turkish Studies, told Radio Sweden⁹⁹ that he was not surprised by the revelations, which mirror reports from other European countries. “It’s quite a dramatic recording. Quite problematic for the organisation if this is indeed what transpired. They are not supposed to do intelligence work in Sweden and it might violate Swedish law. But on the other hand, it’s not entirely surprising that Turkey is mapping this group that they consider to be an enemy of the Turkish state and it’s in line with what’s going on in Turkey and some other European countries.”¹⁰⁰

6.1.3. Swedish Newspaper Dagens Nyheter Found Profiling List

Three days after Radio Sweden’s breaking story on the Turkish government’s espionage activities, a Swedish daily revealed another scandal. Although Turkish Ambassador Türkmen said there was no list of profiled critics and dissidents, Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter (DN) wrote that they found a profiling list that belonged to the Turkish Embassy.¹⁰¹ According to this document, the embassy listed the schools and NGOs set up by sympathizers of the Gülen movement and reported them to Turkey.

According to the report, the Turkish regime had profiled two Swedish primary schools, one nursery school and several associations in Sweden that were allegedly linked to the Gülen movement. DN said the list leaked from Turkey’s embassy in Stockholm was created upon a request from the Diyanet. It adds: “DN obtained a document about Sweden. This document was sent to the Turkish Embassy via the Diyanet’s local branch in Stockholm. The document consists of a list created after investigating the Gülen movement in Sweden.” No individuals were listed in the document, only the names of organizations.

DN’s story confirmed a profiling request from Turkey’s Religious Affairs Directorate (Diyanet) dated September 20, 2016 that was sent to Turkey’s embassies in various countries and signed by Halife Keskin, acting director general of the Diyanet’s external affairs department. It asked imams to send detailed reports about the movement’s

99] “Wallström contacts Turkish ambassador over refugee espionage claims”, Sveriges Radio, 28 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6661564>

100] “Wallström contacts Turkish ambassador over refugee espionage claims”, Sveriges Radio, 28 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6661564>

101] “Turkiet jagar regimkritiker i svenska skolor”, Dagens Nyheter, 1 April 2017, <http://www.dn.se/arkiv/nyheter/turkiet-jagar-regimkritiker-i-svenska-skolor/>

members, schools and institutions.¹⁰² DN also made reference to this document in its story.

DN interviewed a representative from a school linked to the movement. The school official, quoted anonymously for reasons of safety, said: “There were some rumors of this for a while. But now, learning about such a list is interesting. Half our students left the school. The situation is very worrying. The Turkish regime is profiling everyone who remains studying at the school.”

Meanwhile, Ambassador Türkmen, who DN contacted for comments, admitted to the existence of a profiling list. Türkmen confessed that the embassy created such a list and sent it to the Diyanet. However, he claimed it was based on open information and was not an act of espionage.¹⁰³

When asked “Why is knowing about these organizations important to you?” Türkmen said: “It is important. They infiltrated all the apparatuses of the state. They are almost everywhere. They are like cancer cells. Of course, it is important to know which organizations are linked to this group [the Gülen movement].”

DN contacted Paul Levin, director of Stockholm University’s Institute for Turkish Studies, to ask his opinion. Levin said: “The Turkish state has become much more active in mobilizing and controlling the diaspora in different European countries, and the Diyanet is a tool in this. But the question is whether it is allowed to collect the kind of information that is stated in the documents. Refugee espionage or unlawful intelligence activities are prohibited in Sweden. In defense of the embassy, they have omitted information about individuals in their reply. And much of the information is probably already known for those familiar with the Turkish diaspora in Sweden. But it is still far from unproblematic.”¹⁰⁴

6.2. UETD

The Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD) is the most active organization among the toolset used by the long arm of Erdoğan in Europe. The UETD, under the guise of a nongovernmental organization, is believed to be operating as a parallel network along with the embassy and taking initiatives directly from the headquarters of Erdoğan’s ruling AKP in Turkey.

[102] ”Erdoğan bildet europäische Muslime für seinen neuen Spionage-Krieg aus”, Huffington Post, 10 January 2018, http://www.huffingtonpost.de/entry/so-verscharft-erdogan-seinen-spionage-krieg-in-europa_de_5a55b469e4b0b117f8807df2

[103] “Turkiet jagar regimkritiker i svenska skolor”, Dagens Nyheter, 1 April 2017, <http://www.dn.se/arkiv/nyheter/turkiet-jagar-regimkritiker-i-svenska-skolor/>

[104] “Turkiet jagar regimkritiker i svenska skolor”, Dagens Nyheter, 1 April 2017, <http://www.dn.se/arkiv/nyheter/turkiet-jagar-regimkritiker-i-svenska-skolor/>

It was founded in the German city of Cologne in 2004 with the encouragement of then-Prime Minister and current President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. It has in total 31 branches, 14 in Germany, five in France and one each in Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Italy, Hungary and Norway.¹⁰⁵

The UETD came under increased scrutiny in many European countries when it started mobilizing Turkish and Muslim diaspora groups for the political purposes of the Turkish government. It was accused of engaging in illegal espionage activities in several European countries. A European Parliament resolution dated July 6, 2017 highlighted these activities in the diaspora and said it “underlines that the Turkish government must refrain from systematic efforts to mobilise the Turkish diaspora

in Member States for its own purposes; notes with concern the reports of alleged pressure on members of the Turkish diaspora living in Member States; and condemns the Turkish authorities’ surveillance of citizens with dual nationality living abroad.”¹⁰⁶



**UETD
Chairman
Özer Eken
(front) is
very close
to Turkish
Prime
Minister
Binali
Yıldırım.
They were
pictured
together as
riding in the
same car.**

The UETD enjoys high-level contacts with the Turkish government, and its officials have been received by President Erdoğan and other senior officials. The AKP’s deputy chairman, Muhammed Mehdi Eker, who is responsible for external affairs in Erdoğan’s AKP, is the official contact for the UETD, coming to Sweden

as a guest of the UETD during the presidential referendum in April 2017. But the real operative who handles the UETD in many European countries is Metin Külünk, a long-time Erdoğan confidante and Istanbul deputy. Külünk led the armed wing of the Islamist Raiders (Akıncılar) group in the late ’70s and early ’80s and has traveled to Sweden several times in recent years to attend events organized by the UETD.¹⁰⁷ He also helped launch the organization’s Swedish branch.

The speeches of UETD Sweden Chair Özer Eken and the messages conveyed at the

105] <http://uetd.org/bolge-ve-subeler/>

106] “European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2017 on the 2016 Commission Report on Turkey (2016/2308(INI))”, European Parliament, 6 July 2017, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGM-L+TA+P8-TA-2017-0306+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

107] “Erdoğan’s confidante who led armed Islamist group operating in Sweden via UETD”, 10 January 2018, <https://www.turkishminute.com/2018/01/10/opinion-erdogans-confidante-who-led-armed-islamist-group-operating-in-sweden-via-uetd/>

events UETD organizes do not comply with Swedish or European values and include examples of hate speech and extremism.

6.2.1 Three of UETD Events Are Cancelled in Two Months

Three events the UETD planned for October and November 2016 were cancelled for various reasons.¹⁰⁸ The UETD wanted to hold events in Stockholm, Malmö and Göteborg concerning the July 15 coup attempt and a constitutional amendment referendum in Turkey.¹⁰⁹ However, these events were cancelled because of reactions from NGOs, negative coverage in the media and other reasons.

A panel discussion titled “July 15 -- Behind the Scenes of the Gory Coup” was to be held on October 15, 2016 in Bredängsskolan in Stockholm, and pro-AKP journalist Cem Küçük, who called for the assassination of critics abroad including Abdullah Bozkurt, a resident of Sweden, was invited as a speaker. He is known as the “journalist hunter” because of his death threats to journalists critical of the government and his involvement in getting them fired from their jobs. After the discussion, Küçük intended to sign his book titled “Dogs of Hell FETÖ.”¹¹⁰ The book is full of hate speech, defamation and baseless accusations against the Gülen movement.

In addition, Orhan Sali, the A Haber foreign news chief, and Şefi Kerim Ulak, its domestic news editor, were also invited as speakers. A Haber is the main propagandist network for Erdoğan and is managed by Serhat Albayrak, the brother of President Erdoğan’s son-in-law Berat Albayrak. Stockholm City Council member Bo Andersson, who is responsible for schools in the area, requested the cancellation of the panel discussion. A school meeting hall had been rented for the event; however,

108] <https://anfurturkce.net/guncel/kabatas-yalancisinin-mirasisci-uetd-isvec-te-halklari-bir-birine-karsi-kiskirtiyor>-81563

109] A referendum was held on 16 April 2017 for a change by constitutional amendment to a system Erdoğan defined as a ‘Turkish-style presidency.’ With the constitutional amendment, Turkey shifted to presidential system allowing presidents to be affiliated with a political party. The opposition parties criticized the amendment as it consolidated legislative, executive and judicial power in the hands of a party-affiliated president, which could shift the country towards a ‘one-man regime’ and a ‘dictatorship.’ Erdoğan campaigned for the amendment, whereas opposition parties campaigned against it. The referendum was held during a state of emergency (OHAL), and the results were 51.4 percent in favor of the amendment and 48.6 percent against. See: <http://www.ysk.gov.tr/ysk/content/conn/YSKUCM/path/Contribution%20Folders/SecmenIslemleri/Secimler/2017HO/2017HO-Ornek135.pdf>. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and Council of Europe announced that the results were manipulated therefore unfair. “AGİT gözlemcisi: Referandumda kullanılan 2.5 milyon oy şaibeli” (Observer from OSCE: “2.5 million votes are dubious”), [diken.com.tr](http://www.diken.com.tr/agit-gozlemcisi-referandumda-kullanimlan-2-5-milyon-oy-saibeli/), 18th April 2017, <http://www.diken.com.tr/agit-gozlemcisi-referandumda-kullanimlan-2-5-milyon-oy-saibeli/>; “Avrupa Konseyi Gözlemcisi: 2,5 Milyon Oy Manipüle Edilmiş Olabilir” (Observer from Council of Europe: “2.5 million votes might have been manipulated”, [bianet.org](https://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/185623-avrupa-konseyi-gozlemcisi-2-5-milyon-oy-manipule-edilmis-olabilir), 18th April 2017, <https://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/185623-avrupa-konseyi-gozlemcisi-2-5-milyon-oy-manipule-edilmis-olabilir>

110] <http://www.idefix.com/Kitap/Cehennem-Kopekleri/Cem-Kucuk/Arastirma-Tarih/Politika-Arastirma/Turkiye-Politika-urunno=0000000709977>

the day before it was to take place, it was announced that the rental agreement had been unilaterally canceled.¹¹¹

After the cancellation, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu called his Swedish counterpart, Margot Wallström, and insisted that the panel discussion be allowed to take place. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that they called Wallström three times, but Wallström said the decision was made by the school that had rented out the venue and not by the government. The UETD cancelled the event but organized a demonstration in front of Bredängsskolan.

The UETD then decided to sponsor a conference titled “July 15 and the Presidential System” on November 4, 2016 at a hotel in Malmö. AKP deputies Abdullah Ağralı and Abdurrahman Öz were invited as speakers. However, after it was revealed that the real objective of the conference was to justify human rights violations in Turkey, and when it was reported in the Swedish media that Ağralı was accused of being the “mouthpiece of the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant [ISIL],” the hotel management cancelled the conference.¹¹² The Swedish media drew an analogy between Ağralı and Hitler’s Dr. Josef Mengele.¹¹³

Letters written by journalists Kürdo Baksi and Murat Kuseyri to the Quality View Hotel, where the conference was to be held, influenced the decision to cancel. The hotel management stated in a letter sent to UETD Chair Özer Eken that AKP deputy Ağralı’s reference to ISIL had influenced its decision.¹¹⁴

The UETD intended to open a Göteborg branch on November 6, 2016 and hold a conference that same day to which they invited Metin Külünk, an AKP deputy from Istanbul. However, a physical attack by Külünk on opposition party deputies in the Turkish Parliament and provocative statements he made were discussed in an article in Sweden’s highest-circulating newspaper Expressen.¹¹⁵ The Anti-genocide Platform, which consists of some 20 organizations including Kurdish, Assyrian-Nestorian, Armenian, Greek and Swedish associations, applied to the city council for cancellation of the conference.¹¹⁶ The ruling coalition parties in the city, the

111] “İsveç’te 15 Temmuz paneli iptal”, postgazetesi.ch, 15 Ekim 2016, <http://www.postgazetesi.ch/isvecte-15-temmuz-paneli-iptal-5440h.htm>

112] “İsveç’te AKP’li vekile ‘İŞİD sözcüsü olduğu’ iddiasıyla veto”, Cumhuriyet, 1 Kasım 2016, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/dunya/624774/isvec_te_AKP_li_vekile_ISiD_sozcusu_oldugu_iddiasıyla_veto.html

113] “Hur kan du låta Turkiets Dr Mengele föreläsa på ditt hotell?”, Nyheter24, 1 Kasım 2016, <https://nyheter24.se/debatt/865946-hur-kan-du-lata-turkiets-dr-mengele-forelasa-pa-ditt-hotell>

114] “UETD’nin Malmö toplantısı da iptal”, isvecpostasi, 2 Kasım 2016, <http://www.isvecpostasi.com/uetdnin-malmo-toplantisi-da-iptal-h2379.html>

115] “Bör inte erbjuda lokal åt en turkisk extremist”, Expressen, 3 Kasım 2016, <http://www.expressen.se/gt/debatt-gt/bor-inte-erbjudat-lokal-at-en-turkisk-extremist/>; “Erdogans “hatpredikant” föreläser i kommunens lokal”, Expressen, 3 Kasım 2016, <http://www.expressen.se/gt/erdogans-hatpredikant-forelaser-i-kommunens-lokal/>; “Hatpredikantens” föreläsning stoppas”, Expressen, 4 Kasım 2016, <http://www.expressen.se/gt/hatpredikantens-forelasning-stoppas/>

116] “Kabataş yalancısının mirasçısı UETD İsveç’te halkları bir birine karşı kışkırtıyor”, anfturkce.net, 14 Kasım 2016, <https://anfturkce.net/guncel/kabatas-yalancisinin-mirascisi-uetd-isvec-te-halklari-bir-birine-karsi-kiskirtiyor-81563>

Environmental Green Party and the Social Democrats, stated that Sweden is a democratic country and that everyone has a right to express their opinions; hence, they refused to cancel the conference.

However, after growing negative coverage of Külünk in the Swedish media, the UETD changed the program and announced that they had withdrawn Külünk's invitation and that the AKP deputy from Konya, Abdullah Ađralı, would attend the conference instead. Two hundred people from the Anti-genocide Platform attended a meeting with the city council and demanded cancellation of the meeting. However, the council refused to concede. In response, the platform announced that the conference was open to everyone, so they would attend en masse. The UETD directors then held a press conference with Ađralı and announced they had to cancel the conference.¹¹⁷

6.2.2. They Blamed the Gülen Movement for Assassination of Karlov

The UETD made an announcement blaming the movement for the assassination of Russian Ambassador Andrei Karlov in Turkey's capital of Ankara on December 19, 2016 when the evidence indicated that the police officer who killed Karlov was radicalized by cleric Nurettin Yıldız, who is very close to Erdoğan's family. The assassin chanted jihadist slogans after the murder and cited Syria as the reason. He was believed to be linked to the al-Nusra Front. Nevertheless, just like the Erdoğan government, the UETD pointed the finger at the movement.

The UETD's Sweden branch visited the Russian Embassy in Stockholm to express condolences on December 21, 2016. Photos taken during the visit were shared on the organization's Facebook page. The UETD referred to the movement as "FETÖ" and wrote under one of the photos of the visit: "Because the traitor FETÖ terrorist organization assassinated the Russian ambassador, we visited the Russian Embassy to express our condolences and left a wreath."

6.2.3. 'Abdullah Çatlı' Message

A comment added under the UETD's Facebook posting in February 2016 demonstrated the mindset of AKP proxies in Europe. A person with the user name of Temmih Laneu on February 6, 2016 posted: "Europe talks about democracy, but it takes away the democratic rights against terrorism of people of Turkish origin."

117] "İsveç'te UETD şubesinin açılışı iptal edildi", Milliyet, 5 Kasım 2016, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/is-vec-te-uetd-subesinin-acilisi-dunya-2340010/>

It gives every right to the terrorists it feeds but disregards the people who have been living in Europe for years in order to lead them to aggression. ABDULLAH ÇATLIS ARE WELCOME. It cannot be done unless we teach them a lesson.”



Abdullah Çatlı, the most well-known mafia figure in Turkey, was recruited by Turkish government to carry out assassinations abroad. A Facebook user named Ali Yılmaz shared his words to threaten members of the Gülen movement.

Similar posts were shared on the Facebook page of the UETD’s Goteborg branch. A user named Ali Yılmaz shared a picture of Abdullah Çatlı on March 12, 2017 with this quote: “One should not talk with terrorists or negotiate with them. Shoot them in the head, and acquire merit in God’s sight.” The same user commented on Erdoğan’s picture on December 19, 2016, stating, “We either make them fully silent or make them spew blood.”

These examples are not individual or isolated cases. It was mentioned before how pro-Erdogan journalists Ersoy Dede and Hikmet Genç made statements defending Abdullah Çatlı’s methods on live TV. This mentality is deeply rooted in the mindset of a certain group of people. Abdullah Çatlı was known to have carried out assassinations abroad of people who were labeled as traitors on behalf of the state. The use of his name refers to clandestine operations, assassinations and extrajudicial executions perpetrated

by the Turkish government. He is the “hero” of the ultranationalist and Islamist supporters of the Erdoğan regime today.

Çatlı was a famous militant of the nationalist Grey Wolves group in Turkey and the best-known figure among secret paramilitary elements linked to the Turkish state security services. He had conducted murders on behalf of the Turkish state. His name was heard in the 1980s for the assassinations he carried out of members of the Armenian terrorist organization ASALA. Çatlı died in the highly publicized Susurluk car accident in 1993, yet his name is still revered and invoked by fanatics to threaten people.

For instance, Hakan Büyük, a 29-year-old Dutch journalist of Turkish origin, experienced similar things when he was threatened by pro-AKP fanatics. Büyük, who worked for Zaman Vandaag, a newspaper known to be close to the Hizmet movement, received threats such as “You are going to be killed”; “We are going to shoot you in the head”; “Live your life watching your back”; “You will fall into our hands. We will shed your blood”; “If we do not send our Çatlıs and shoot these bastards in the head in the middle of Europe, even the Netherlands will start standing up to us” and he reported the threats to the police.¹¹⁸

118] “Dutch-Turkish Journalist Faces Death Threats By Erdogan’s Fanatics”, stockholmcf.org, 16 March 2017, <https://stockholmcf.org/dutch-turkish-journalist-faces-death-threats-by-erdogans-fanatics/>

Even Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu praised these methods in his statements, clearly indicating that there was an official “mastermind” behind these threats.¹¹⁹ Soylu said in a speech on March 8, 2017 that there had been a conceptual shift in the Republic of Turkey’s perception of security and when addressing Turks abroad said, “We will not leave you alone in the countries in which you have settled.”

Moreover, a video message from Turkey’s best-known mafia leader, Sedat Peker, in which he threatened European countries a day before Soylu’s speech, comports with this “new concept.” Peker, who expressed his loyalty to President Erdoğan, threatened European countries, saying: “When the right time comes, Europeans will learn exactly how our people, who have been brought up with the belief that those who look at life fearlessly are not afraid of death, can organize such protests in every corner of Europe, much worse than the Gezi protests.”¹²⁰

Furthermore, during a diplomatic crisis with the Netherlands,¹²¹ the pro-AKP Islamist newspaper Yeni Akit published a report on its website stating: “The Netherlands army has 48,000 soldiers; there are 400,000 Turks living in the Netherlands,”¹²² which reveals a similar mindset. The report refers to all Turks living in Europe as being “soldiers” whose allegiance lies with the Erdoğan government.

In light of the terrible background associated with this gang leader, posts shared on the UETD’s page such as “ABDULLAH ÇATLIS ARE WELCOME” prompted concerns among critics and opponents of the Turkish government.

6.2.4. UETD: Sending Children to These Schools Is the Same as a Coup

On March 5, 2016, the UETD hosted a breakfast in Stockholm’s Handen neighborhood to support the ‘Yes’ campaign for the April 16, 2016 referendum in Turkey that would bestow executive presidential powers on Erdoğan. AKP deputy for Konya Abdullah Ağralı attended the event as a speaker.¹²³

119] ‘Bir de başımıza Almanya çıktı’ (Germany comes on top of it), Hürriyet, 08.03.2017 <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/bir-de-basimiza-almanya-cikti-40388917>

120] “Pro-Erdoğan Gang Leader Threatens European Countries With Violent Protests”, stockholmcf.org, 7 March 2017, <https://stockholmcf.org/pro-erdogan-gang-leader-threatens-european-countries-with-violent-protests/>

121] During the campaign period leading up to the constitutional referendum on April 16, 2017 Turkey had diplomatic crises with many European countries including Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands. Political campaign events held by Turkish ministers were either restricted or prohibited.

122] “Hollanda’nın nüfusu ne kadar?” (What is the population of the Netherlands?), Yeni Akit, 12 March 2017, <http://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/hollandanin-nufusu-ne-kadar-288739.html>

123] “İsveç’te Ak Parti Skm kahvaltısına Ağralı katıldı”, [isvecgundemi.com](http://www.isvecgundemi.com), 5 Mart 2017, <https://www.isvecgundemi.com/siyaset/isvec-te-ak-parti-skm-kahvaltisine-agrali-katildi-h8790.html>

UETD Chairman Eken delivered a speech and called on the Turkish community in Sweden to refrain from sending their children to schools linked to the Gülen movement.¹²⁴ Eken emphasized that the Swedish government granted money per student and that therefore sending children to these schools was tantamount to financially supporting the movement. He claimed that enrolling Turkish children in these schools was the same as a coup against the Turkish government itself.

“Our fight with FETÖ will continue here. If you have children, I am saying this clearly, if your children continue studying at their schools, you are sending gifts to FETÖ. The Swedish government pays 20-25,000 krona per student. It gives this money to their schools. You are encouraging it. It is like cooperating with them, as if you had joined the coup in Turkey or something like that. I am saying this clearly. I kindly request for the sake of Turkey, please do not support FETÖ terrorist organizations. According to official numbers, at the moment 752 people have applied to Migrationsverket. But we are a nation that climbed on tanks on July 15 and stopped the bullets with our heads. We will also assess this situation as Swedes and work accordingly. I want to pass our prime minister’s greetings on to you. I spoke with him yesterday, and he sends his greetings to all of you.”¹²⁵

As mentioned above, a voice recording of Eken broadcast on Radio Sweden on March 28, 2017 was a continuation of the same harassment campaign pursued by the UETD. In this voice recording that was also later published on Radio Sweden’s website,¹²⁶ Eken was speaking on the phone with a Swedish man of Turkish descent and threatening him.¹²⁷

After the broadcast, Liberal Party MP and former minister Birgitta Ohlsson reacted harshly to the Turkish state’s profiling of dissidents and demanded that the Swedish foreign minister summon the Turkish ambassador to the ministry.¹²⁸

6.2.5. UETD Women’s Branch Chair Engages in Defamation, Incitement to Violence

One of the UETD’s most outspoken figures in Sweden is Gülsen Çigel, who uses the

124] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnJ9kvInbtc>, Son izlenme tarihi: 11 August 2017

125] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnJ9kvInbtc>, Son izlenme tarihi: 11 August 2017

126] “Turkish government tracking down regime critics in Sweden”, Sverigesradio, 28 Mart 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6661315>

127] “Özer Eken ändrar sig om inspelning”, Sverigesradio, 29 Mart 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6662767>

128] “AKP’s espionage activity in Sweden exposed”, ANF English, 29 March 2017, <https://anfenglish.com/news/akp-s-espionage-activity-in-sweden-exposed-19222>



The head of the UETD women's branches in Sweden, Gülsen Çiğel, called on Turks to not lease apartment to members of the Gülen movement in a discriminatory message.

adopted last name of Vatansever, which means patriot, on social media accounts. She is head of the UETD women's branches in Sweden. She is known for engaging in slander as part of hate speech campaigns targeting critics of the Erdoğan government as well as members of the Gülen movement in Sweden.

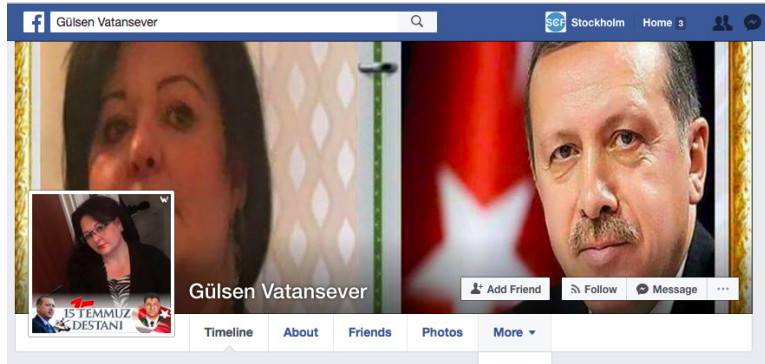
For example, on April 24, 2017 she shared the following message on her personal Facebook account: "Announcement to the [Turkish] community in Sweden! FETÖ members who fled Turkey for Sweden are looking for houses. Do not rent your houses to people you don't know." She was calling for a boycott and open discrimination. Gülsen posted this message after she interfered in a housing sublet deal in Rinkby in which a relative, Ramazan Kalender, leased an apartment in the building in which she lives to exiled Turkish journalist

Abdullah Bozkurt. Bozkurt, who had never met Gülsen before, found a group of six people led by Gülsen knocking on his door on the day he and his family moved into the flat.

"It was around dinnertime when the doorbell rang, just as we were unpacking. The kids were in the back room putting their stuff in a closet and rearranging the room to their liking. Gülsen, her husband, three other men and one young woman were standing at the door, and they wanted to talk to me. They came in and started asking questions about my views of the Turkish government. When they realized I was critical of Erdoğan, Gülsen vowed that she would never agree to her relative leasing the flat to a traitor, coup plotter and terrorist. When I told her I was a journalist, she even said the pen is more dangerous than guns. I realized this was not a safe place for me and my family, and we rushed out the front door within hours of this terrible encounter that my children unfortunately had to witness."

On July 18, 2017 Gülsen started publicly naming Bozkurt as the man she prevented from moving into an apartment he had sublet after Bozkurt's picture was circulated like a wanted man in a Wild-West-style poster and published by the Turkish government's Anadolu news agency on July 15, 2017. Bozkurt was also targeted in the lead story of the pro-government Akşam daily on July 22, 2017, which referred to a story on the wrongful imprisonment of top human rights defenders in Turkey on the website of the Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF), a monitoring group that Bozkurt leads as president. The story, titled "Büyükaada İttifakı" (An alliance of Büyükaada), claimed that the jailed human rights defenders were foreign agents and mentioned Bozkurt, SCF and the Greens Party as having launched a joint campaign to defend them. It said Europe was in a panic over the arrest of what it called "agents."

Gülsen Çiğel uses a profile photo showing her next to Turkish president Erdoğan.



The story recalled that the Greens launched a petition campaign urging Federica Mogherini, high representative of the EU for foreign affairs and security policy and vice president of the EU Commission, to secure the release of the jailed

human rights defenders during her upcoming visit to Turkey on July 25, 2017. A defamation campaign was launched after Turkey arrested six human rights defenders -- İdil Eser (Amnesty International), Günel Kurşun and Veli Acu (Human Rights Agenda Association), Özlem Dalkıran (Citizens Assembly), Ali Gharavi (IT strategy consultant from Sweden) and Peter Steudtner (non-violence and wellbeing trainer from Germany) -- while they had a meeting at a hotel on the Istanbul island of Büyükada on digital security.

In a posting dated July 18, 2017 on Facebook, Gülsen said: “There is nothing that I haven’t said to that scumbag’s face. But our people still rent their houses to them.” “It was Abdullah Bozkurt who came with his family. Of course, I did not know who he was. I was suspicious, and I said: I WOULD NOT RENT OUT MY HOUSE TO A TRAITOR. IT ISN’T NECESSARY TO USE BULLETS TO BE A TERRORIST; ONE CAN BE A VERY GOOD TERRORIST WITH A PEN. He said, ‘But don’t say it anywhere; they will laugh at you’.”

On August 12, 2017, Gülsen again targeted Bozkurt. On her Facebook account she shared Bozkurt’s photo taken with a banner stating “Free Media Can Not Be Silenced” and said: “THIS UNDIGNIFIED PERSON LIVES IN SWEDEN AROUND RİNKEBY TENSTA. HOW CAN HE LIVE IN AN AREA WHERE THAT MANY TURKS LIVE? I BLAME US, WE PATRIOTS. I DO NOT ASK YOU TO DO ANYTHING BAD TO ANYONE. IT IS ENOUGH IF YOU SPIT IN HIS FACE.”

Despite the fact that following this post she stated that she does not encourage anyone to do anything illegal, she added, “It makes my blood boil to see them walk around freely.” A person named Yaşar Yıldız commented on this post and made the following threats: “You should be impaled on a pole one by one. ... Eventually you will come into our hands; if our Turks show a little bit of effort, they will finish you off. Eventually you will bump into a brave man.”

On another of her social media posts, the chair of the UETD women’s branch

mentioned the Anadolu news agency's (AA) Stockholm correspondent Atila Altuntaş¹²⁹ and called Abdullah Bozkurt “undignified.” Altuntaş pointed to Bozkurt as a target on his personal Facebook page on July 18, 2017 and referred to a report titled “15 July: Erdoğan’s Coup”¹³⁰ written by the Stockholm Center for Freedom, of which Bozkurt is the president. Without any evidence Altuntaş posted aggressive statements: “They plotted the coup, attempted it, and when they failed they fled and sought refuge in Sweden. In Stockholm they launched a think tank, and they’re trying to blame others for the coup to clear themselves.”

Gülsen commented on the post and carried his insults to the level of pointing out people as targets. She referred to 15-year-old Eren Sümbül, who was killed in Trabzon, Turkey, by PKK gunfire on August 12, 2017, and said: “A 15-year-old child saved his fatherland, but this undignified man lives in Rinkeby Tensta, and nobody spits in his face. Turks who leased their houses to him should be ashamed of themselves. His name is Abdullah Bozkurt.” She also wrote: “I told you not only those who use bullets are terrorists; you are bigger terrorists.” Although Bozkurt has never responded to any of her messages, the UETD official continued her insults the next day. Addressing Bozkurt, she posted the following tweets: “And you play the innocent person. You cannot trick us. I kicked you out of the house straight away”; “Our dear President clears the country of dirt bags like you”; and “Abdullah Bozkurt, you are a terrorist.”

Bozkurt, who also received death threats from anonymous users on Twitter around the same time Gülsen started targeting, stalking and harassing him, filed a complaint with the Swedish police alleging defamation and incitement to violence. The police interrogated her, and the case is still pending. The Swedish media covered Bozkurt’s saga extensively and published details of the harassment campaign.

6.3. The Diyanet

Turkey’s Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) has been the most functional apparatus used by Erdoğan’s regime in recent years to project a political Islamist narrative abroad, cultivate support among diaspora groups and profile and collect information about regime critics and opponents. The Diyanet’s budget dwarfs the budgets of 11 Turkish ministries including the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Development, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology, the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.¹³¹ For 2018, the Diyanet’s budget is TL

129] Altuntaş is also owner of the website isvecgundemi.com which publishes Turkish news in Sweden. The site functions as an AKP propaganda machine.

130] http://stockholmcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/15_July_Erdogans_Coup_13.07.2017.pdf

131] “2017 bütçesi Erdoğan ve Diyanet’e yaradı”, Birgün, 26 Aralık 2016, <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/2017-butcesi-erdogan-ve-diyamet-e-yaradi-140878.html>

7.8 billion (approximately \$2.1 billion). In 2017, while Turkey’s annual budget for central administration was TL 645.1 billion, TL 6.8 billion of it was allocated to the Diyanet.¹³² Considering that the annual budget of the Prime Ministry is TL 1.584 billion, the situation becomes more obvious since the Diyanet’s budget is four times higher. Interestingly enough, in 2016 the Diyanet announced that it had exceeded its TL 6.5 billion budget and demanded additional funds.¹³³ The Diyanet also asked for an additional payment of TL 1.3 billion for its 2017 budget.¹³⁴

The organization’s power is not only derived from its finances. It is also one of the biggest organizations in Turkey, with a staff of 117,378, 71.362 of whom are imams.¹³⁵ According to official Diyanet statistics from December 31, 2016, there are 87,381 mosques in Turkey.¹³⁶ The Diyanet maintains organizations abroad as well. Religious advisors and attachés work as part of Turkish embassies. It has religious advisory officers in 52 countries, attaché offices in 38 countries and has in total 2,043 religious staff members in various positions in 102 countries.¹³⁷ Moreover in many countries the Diyanet Foundation operates under a variety of names and functions to supplement the Diyanet’s activities.

Since 1971 the Diyanet has provided religious services for Turks living abroad, and in recent years it is seen as the most important foreign policy tool of Erdoğan’s regime. Many of the officers who oversee the voting booths set up overseas for expatriates to cast their votes in Turkish elections are imams.¹³⁸ Some of these imams openly disseminate AKP propaganda during campaigns and at the ballot box and even vote on behalf of other voters,¹³⁹ which all go to support the claim that the Diyanet has become heavily politicized. In addition, there are credible allegations that the mosques were reorganized as bases of espionage and that imams function as spies. Leaked official documents have shown such activities.

The leftist Turkish Cumhuriyet daily published a story titled “The Diyanet is like MİT” on December 8, 2016, revealing how the Diyanet collected information on

132] “2017 bütçesi Erdoğan ve Diyanet’e yaradı”, Birgün, 26 Aralık 2016, <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/2017-butcesi-erdogan-ve-diyamet-e-yaradi-140878.html>

133] “6.5 milyarlık bütçe Diyanet’e yetmedi”, Sözcü, 27 Mart 2017, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2017/ekonomi/6-5-milyarlik-butce-diyamete-yetmedi-1757685/>

134] “Diyanet, 1.3 milyar ek ödenek isteyecek”, Birgün, 29 Ağustos 2017, <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/diyamet-1-3-milyar-ek-odene-isteyecek-176950.html>

135] “Diyanet, personel sayısı açıkladı”, dinihaberler.com, 7 Mart 2017, <http://www.dinihaberler.com/diyamet-haber/diyamet-personel-sayisi-acikladi-h104145.html>

136] <https://www.diyamet.gov.tr/tr/kategori/istatistikler/136>

137] “Diyanet 102 ülkede hizmet veriyor”, diyanet.gov.tr, 30 Ocak 2017, <https://www.diyamet.gov.tr/tr/icerik/diyamet-102-ulkede-hizmet-veriyor/39449?getEnglish=>

138] İmamlar sandık başkanı oldu!, Yeni Hayat, 26.05.2015
<http://www.yenihayat.de/2015/05/26/imamlar-sandik-baskani-oldu/>

139] AKP’nin sandık hileleri başladı, Sözcü, 27.05.2015
<http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2015/gundem/akpnin-sandik-hileleri-basladi-834334/>

members of the Gülen movement and submitted it to the parliamentary commission that investigated the coup bid of July 15, 2016.¹⁴⁰ The Diyanet sent documents to the commission proving it is tackling the movement, which was also an admission of collecting intelligence about the movement in 38 countries including Sweden.

A document leaked from the Diyanet showed how it requested that branches abroad write reports to present at the 9th Eurasian Islamic Council to be held in Istanbul October 11-14, 2016. On behalf of the Diyanet's head, the letter was signed by Professor Halife Keskin, the deputy manager of foreign relations at the Diyanet. The letter, dated September 20, 2016, was sent to religious services attachés in embassies and consulates in 38 countries, from Central Asia, Europe and the Balkans to Africa and the Far East.

The official letter states: "It is requested that you write a detailed report about all the organizations, activities, educational institutions (nursery schools, primary schools, colleges, faculties, dormitories), NGOs, charities, human resources and associations organizing cultural events of FETÖ/PDY (Fethullahist Terrorist Organization/Parallel State Structure) in the countries and regions in which you are working. You are requested to send these reports to disiliskiler@diyanet.gov.tr by September 27, 2016."

The reports sent from the respective countries were profiling lists, as expected. Names, pictures and details of people and organizations close to the Gülen movement were included. The Cumhuriyet article said: "The reports created by the staff of the mosques, religious coordinators and religious services consultancy offices include detailed intelligence on FETÖ's schools and supplementary courses, FETÖ-linked companies, associations, foundations and media organizations in their respective countries. Of these approximately 50 reports about 38 countries, the name of the religious staff member who collected the intelligence and the name of the mosque where they work are stated. In some reports the names of the religious coordinators of the countries are included. Personal comments about individuals were made."¹⁴¹

According to Cumhuriyet, the Diyanet's Germany-Cologne report was among the documents submitted to the parliamentary commission that investigated the coup. The article gives details about the report, which was drafted by mosque staff and titled "Cologne Religious Relations Advisory Office, 2nd Region Mosques Eurasia Council Report" and states: "In the Oberbergischer Kreis province of Bergneustadt where our mosque is also located, there is only one educational institution that is linked to FETÖ, and it is named AKTİVE LERNHİLFE. This place is the main base of all activities of the Parallel State Structure in Oberbergischer Kreis. The collection

140] Diyanet MİT gibi, Cumhuriyet, 08.12.2016
http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/641909/Diyanet_MiT_gibi.html

141] Diyanet MİT gibi, Cumhuriyet, 08.12.2016
http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/641909/Diyanet_MiT_gibi.html

of alms, donations and human resources are directed from this center. All of its members and managers come to our mosque. This corrupt hub survives with their support, disseminates propaganda against our mosque and cooperates with German authorities as well as with the local media. N.S. Bergneustadt Central Mosque Religious Personnel.”

In the same report, the religious personnel of another mosque list information about people linked to the Hizmet movement as follows: “The Area Director,” “Retains his position after the July 15 coup attempt” and “He is active in the collection of donations and other tasks.” The report, which is signed “H. A. Fürthen/Sieg Mosque Religious Personnel,” also includes other intelligence such as:

- B.D. and C.D.: These people used to live here, then were temporarily employed by educational institutions in the Cologne region by the organization. It is said they are still active.

- T.Ö.: During his university years he stayed at the houses of this organization and came to Germany after marrying someone from here. Although she is not involved in any activities, it is said that she is still sympathetic to the movement. She is a housewife.

6.3.1 The Diyanet’s Activities in Sweden

A report dated April 1, 2017 in the Dagens Nyheter (DN) newspaper¹⁴² was based on this secret document. Ambassador Türkmen admitted that he created a profiling list at the request of the Diyanet. According to the Sweden Diyanet Foundation (Svenska Islam Stiftelsen), there are eight mosques in Sweden that have imams appointed by the Diyanet.¹⁴³ Five of them are in the capital city of Stockholm, while the others are located in Göteborg, Malmö and Jönköping. The foundation has 14 religious staff members in total. Just like other mosques in Europe they function as an AKP branch and espionage center.

DN investigated and reported on the Swedish Diyanet Foundation’s political activities before the April 16, 2017 constitutional referendum in Turkey.¹⁴⁴ The mosques had almost turned into election campaign offices, according to DN. The reporter observed the campaign for two days with the chair of the UETD. The AKP’s campaign team went to the Turkish mosque in Handen and campaigned for “yes”

142] “Erdogans kampanj sprider rädsla bland turksvenskar”, Dagens Nyheter, 1 April 2017, <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/erdogans-kampanj-sprider-radsla-bland-turksvenskar/>

143] <http://diyanet.se/inc.php?p=camiiler>

144] “Erdogans kampanj sprider rädsla bland turksvenskar”, Dagens Nyheter, 1 April 2017, <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/erdogans-kampanj-sprider-radsla-bland-turksvenskar/>

Bilal Karabudak, member of the administrative board of the Malmö Mosque Association was expelled for allegedly supporting the Gülen movement.



votes to amend the constitution in the referendum. Also, many people came to Eken to ask for tickets from him for a movie called “Reis,” a propaganda film about Erdoğan that was to be shown in cinemas. “Reis” means “chief” in Turkish, and it is a nickname given to Erdoğan by his followers.

The mosques were discussed in Sweden during the general elections in Turkey on November 1, 2015. There are more than 37,000 Turkish voters in Sweden, and 12,596 of them voted in the elections. Many NGO leaders, such as Haki Korkmaz, a founding member of nationalist Grey Wolves Swedish branch; Bilal Karabudak, a founding member of the Young Swedish Turks Association (MUST)

in Malmö; and Ali Çağan, the diplomatic representative of the Alevi Federation, criticized the Diyanet for becoming politicized. According to Turkish journalist Menaf Alıcı, who observed voting at the Kistamässan Convention Center in the north of Stockholm where polling booths were set up, Karabudak was showing a picture of a bus with President Erdoğan and then-Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu in the photo and said: “Someone from the Administrative Board of the Diyanet sent me this picture. This bus was hired with money collected by the Turkish Diyanet Foundation’s Göteborg branch. It transported voters to Stockholm on condition of voting for the AKP; that is a disgrace.”¹⁴⁵

Korkmaz said that was not something new and that it happened during the previous elections as well. “The Diyanet’s mosques are unfortunately the AKP’s backyard, and they are politicized. All of them, including their imams, campaign for the AKP. It damages the core of the religion. Our religion is universal. If you manipulate people towards one party, if you use it as the backyard of certain people, you hurt Muslims and you damage the reliability of Muslim religious personnel. Such things happening in the Diyanet Foundation’s mosques hurt me, upset me.”¹⁴⁶

145] “Din adamları, dine yazık edersiniz..!” Menaf Alıcı, haberisvec.net, 26 Ekim 2015, <http://www.haberisvec.net/yazar/8114-menaf-alici-din-adamlari-dine-yazik-edersiniz.html>

146] “Din adamları, dine yazık edersiniz..!” Menaf Alıcı, haberisvec.net, 26 Ekim 2015, <http://www.haberisvec.net/yazar/8114-menaf-alici-din-adamlari-dine-yazik-edersiniz.html>

6.3.2 Bilal Karabudak's Experiences

Karabudak was elected to the administrative board of the Malmö Mosque Association on February 16, 2016 and was faced with a problem around April or May. The new administration wanted to grant the association's building, valued at 2 million euros, to the Diyanet's Sweden branch. But the main purpose was not granting the building but handing over the mosque to the Diyanet. According to the mosque association regulations, in order to do this they had to have two extraordinary congresses in two months' time and secure the support of two-thirds of the board members, which was not possible at the time.

Karabudak explained what happened next to SCF:

“During a board meeting Nurettin İncegül and Harun Elagöz came up with an idea. They suggested granting the building to the Diyanet without an extraordinary congress. In order to be able to do that they suggested changing the regulations in a way that members of a congress would not understand. The plan was to have a congress for a change in the regulations, as a result of which the administrative board would be given the right to sell or grant the building to anyone.

“The chair of the association, İrfan Tözmal, and I rejected that proposal. After our rejection, they decided to explain the purpose of the change in regulations to members of the congress. This request actually came from Fatih Mehmet Karaca, the advisor at the Embassy Religious Services Office. Tözmal was aware of the request from the embassy because Karaca had a similar conversation with him in the past. Tözmal said to Karaca, ‘According to the regulations, we cannot do such a thing without asking the members of the congress.’ Karaca responded: ‘You are the chairman; you can do this without going through that process. It is religiously permissible, and there's no problem. Don't worry.’

“I was interviewed by the Sydsvenskan newspaper about the July 15 coup attempt. The interview was published on the newspaper's website on July 16, 2016.¹⁴⁷ I said during the interview: ‘A coup would not happen like this. A coup is the worst thing that can happen to a country. However, a fictional coup is even worse than this. Erdoğan calling people into the streets is dangerous and may lead to a civil war. It seems to me that we sacrificed these 200 people.’ I emphasized that members of the Gülen movement would be labeled as terrorists in Turkey, and I warned that the discussion in Turkey could polarize the Turkish community in Malmö.

“My statements were not welcomed by the mosque association. I was criticized all

147] “Konflikten i Turkiet märks även i Malmö”, Sydsvenskan, 16 July 2016, <https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2016-07-16/konflikten-i-turkiet-marks-aven-i-malmo>

the time by the administration. They were trying to discourage me. I understood something was going wrong. Mehmet Emin Can, the imam of the mosque, was sharing his opinions on social media as if he were an advisor of Erdoğan. I found it problematic as a member of the administrative board. Politics should have been kept away from the mosque.

“I went on holiday in August. When I returned on the 4th of September, I learnt that I had been discharged from the board by the administration. They cited my absence as an excuse. But that was not true because I informed them about my non-attendance. According to the regulations a member of the administrative board can be discharged if he fails to attend three meetings without an excuse. However, I informed them of my absence each time. I appealed the decision and told them I was still on duty. I went to the mosque on the 7th of September. The chairman, Harun Elagöz, and administrative board member Nurettin İncegül were there. They wanted to talk with me. They knew their reason for firing me was invalid. Elagöz, who is also the chairperson of the Malmö İslam and Culture Association, said, ‘The main reason is that the advisor at the Embassy’s Religious Services Office does not want you on the board.’

“Harun told me my interview with Sydsvenskan had been reported to the Diyanet in Turkey, and they said as long as I was on the board the Diyanet would not send imams to Malmö and would withdraw the imam here. Fatih Karaca told them: ‘Discharge Bilal from the board. If you get rid of Bilal, I will call the imam back on Monday. If Bilal is still on the board on Monday, the imam is going to be sent back to Turkey. It is as simple as that. I told them the advisor does not have such authority and could not interfere in the internal regulations of our association. Then Harun Elagöz got angry and walked up to me to intimidate me. I heard from Tözmal this was the request of the advisor Karaca. But as the regulations were clear, they could not discharge me. I continued to attend meetings.

“They asked me to resign before the extraordinary congress on November 6, 2016. I tried to reach the advisor at the Embassy Religious Services Office a few times; however, he neither answered my phone calls nor responded to my messages. A week before the conference, they had a meeting with me to convince me to resign. Harun Elagöz said it could have been the imam of the mosque who reported me to the advisor, and he said the imam had the right to do that.

“Up until the day of congress, they tried to persuade me to resign. A day before the congress I wrote my letter of resignation. In my letter I mentioned the corruption, the financial links with the Diyanet, which are illegal according to Swedish law, and the interference of the advisor at the Embassy Religious Services Office in our association. The administration then got angry with me and returned my letter of resignation. I said if you want me to resign, I am only going to resign with this letter. And then I talked about the interview and someone reporting the interview

to Turkey. I said, 'It might mean I cannot go to Turkey again.' Administrative board member Havva Aydın Karanlık said, 'Did you actually think you could go Turkey anymore?'

"The administrative board decided to discharge me. That decision was brought to the general assembly for a vote. Some people made speeches there. Havva Aydın Karanlık said: 'We cooperate with the Diyanet. They send imams to us. We cannot do without imams. In that case can the Diyanet intervene or not? The Diyanet means Turkish state, does it not? It does. Therefore, the Diyanet has said, "You cannot keep this FETÖ member, someone who is sympathetic to FETÖ, on your administrative board".'

"Harun Elagöz gave a speech to the members of the general assembly as well and said: 'The advisor at the Embassy Religious Services Office sent you a clear message. He said: "If this person has this ideology, we will not keep people against the state in that institution. If Bilal is there, I am going to withdraw my imam".'

"As a result, the administrative board made a decision about me, and the general assembly confirmed it. The chair, İrfan Tözmal, said: 'We want to remain loyal to the Republic of Turkey. At the end of the day, the Republic of Turkey is behind us.'

"Honorary Consul General of Malmö Hakkı Uludağ was at the assembly as well. I learned that the Turkish Embassy was behind my discharge by the administrative board. I was accused of being a supporter of the Gülen movement. However, it was referred to as a terrorist organization, 'FETÖ.' I called the police when I received death threats at the meeting when I was discharged. The police came and asked for statements."

One of the people at this meeting who kept their name anonymous said to the Dagens Nyheter newspaper: "If you reject this decision, you say 'no' to the Turkish state... Saying 'no' [to his discharge] would be not loving your state. Nobody wants to be reported as the person who does not love their fatherland."¹⁴⁸

Turkish journalist Emre Oğuz, who lives in Malmö, commented on the incident to Dagens Nyheter: "With this change [in the board], the Diyanet made the Malmö mosque a safe zone for Turkey. In that way, it intended to expand its influence in the Turkish-Swedish community in the city. The imam who was appointed by Turkey would have been replaced by the board [of the mosque association]. This imam could have been fired; a Swedish imam could have been appointed instead and relations with Turkey could have been severed. But now the mosques belong to the Diyanet. That can no longer be done. In a Swedish community, everything is being

148] "Erdogans kampanj sprider rädsla bland turksvenskar", Dagens Nyheter, 1 April 2017, <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/erdogans-kampanj-sprider-radsla-bland-turksvenskar/>



**Turkish
journalist
Emre Oğuz**

decided by Ankara.”¹⁴⁹

Two months later, Karabudak sent the videos he recorded at the congress to the Swedish media. On January 7, 2017, *Sydsvenskan* had another interview with him.¹⁵⁰ Their report was titled “He criticized the Turkish government and was threatened with death” and said: “Death threats, accused of being a terrorist and losing his seat on the board... Bilal Karabudak testifies to how turmoil in Turkey has led to polarization among Turks in Malmö. He did not know what consequences it would lead to when he shared his views with *Sydsvenskan* on July 15, 2016.”

Karabudak told the newspaper: “I’m independent from a political point of view. But it’s sufficient to simply not share the government’s views to be charged by it. It’s not just about Gülen anymore.” He summarized how he felt after the congress: “During the same meeting, an unknown man suddenly stood up. He said he was a former member of the Turkish military and that he did not want to be in the same room with a traitor like me. I was worried. I decided to keep silent on social media. I avoided places full of strangers. I have stopped going to the mosque. I no longer feel safe.”

After this interview, the mosque association refuted Karabudak’s allegations with a statement. But when Karabudak uploaded the videos, they withdrew their statement.

The Karabudak family was planning to go to Turkey in January 2017. They had not been to Turkey in 2016. They were going to spend Christmas and New Year’s vacation in Turkey. However, his wife cancelled the trip after what happened. Around that time, they heard Bilal’s mother-in-law was sick. Although Bilal told his wife, “What happened to me is not related to you; you can go to Turkey,” he was unable to convince her. His wife did not dare go, but his mother-in-law’s health got worse. Bilal’s wife booked a ticket for January 13; however, her mother passed away on January 11. She did not see her mother for the last time nor did she attend her funeral. This is what the witch-hunt has cost the Karabudak family. The reports about Bilal continued to be published in other media outlets. For example, *İsveç Postası*, a website broadcast in Turkish, had an interview with him about the corruption at the mosque association.¹⁵¹

It was followed by increased pressure on him. Karabudak told SCF what happened next: “Harun Elagöz called my mobile number on January 27, 2017. My wife

149] “Erdogans kampanj sprider rädsla bland turksvenskar”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 1 April 2017, <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/erdogans-kampanj-sprider-radsla-bland-turksvenskar/>

150] “Han kritiserade turkiska regeringen – blev mordhotad”, *Sydsvenskan*, 7 January 2017, <https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2017-01-07/han-kritiserade-turkiska-regeringen-blev-mordhotad>

151] “Bilal Karabudak: Haksızlığa uğradım, tehdit edildim”, *isvecpostasi.com*, 21 Ocak 2017, <http://www.isvecpostasi.com/bilal-karabudak-haksizliga-ugradim-tehdit-edildim-h2474.html>

answered the phone as I was asleep. It was when my wife had just lost her mother. When I woke up I heard my wife crying and Harun shouting. He was again threatening us. He was shouting: ‘Come outside. I am coming there. We are going to talk with you.’ We called the police. As he had called on his phone at work, we reported the incident to his workplace as well. Meanwhile, the administrative board of the mosque association decided to have a second extraordinary congress. The new regulations would be approved and the building would be handed over to the Diyanet. I went to the congress as well. At the end of the meeting members of the board Harun Elagöz and İbrahim Ekiz attacked my brother Osman Karabudak and me. They pushed us into the corner of the hall and attempted to beat us up. We had to call the police to the mosque for the second time.”

The chairman of the mosque association, İrfan Tözmal, resigned in April 2017. Havva Aydın Karanlık was appointed to his post without an election. Karanlık is also a Green Party member in Malmö.

6.3.3. Journalist Oğuz: The Imams Profile All the Visitors

Journalist Emre Oğuz, who lives in Malmö, spoke to Radio Sweden on March 29, 2017 and narrated his observations of profiling. “The Imams [who are paid by the Diyanet] must report people who go to the mosque. I know that. I talked to imams before the coup attempt. It was a special task for them. Imams who do not want to report are reported. So now all imams follow the directive from Turkey.”¹⁵²

Oğuz said the people on the lists of traitors would be arrested upon arrival in Turkey. He emphasized that not only the people on the lists but also their families and relatives in Turkey were at risk. Oğuz is convinced that he is on one of those lists. “People close to the AKP have told me directly. They say they reported me to the embassy. If I go to Turkey, I am sure that they will arrest me, and I will not be able to return to Sweden.”¹⁵³

Oğuz also spoke to the DN newspaper on April 1, 2017, which reported: “The phone in the pocket of Emre’s coat has lots of threatening and insulting messages sent by loyal supporters of Erdoğan in Sweden as well as Facebook messages, texts and voice records accusing him of being a terrorist and a Gülenist. ‘I am none of them. I am a journalist. I am actually disgusted with politicians,’ he says. Oğuz takes his phone and plays a voice message sent by a person living in Borås. An intimidating and

152] “Turkish government tracking down regime critics in Sweden”, Sveriges Radio, 28 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6661315>

153] “Özer Eken ändrar sig om inspelning”, Sverigesradio, 29 Mart 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6662767>

psychotic-sounding voice says in Turkish: ‘What kind of journalist are you? Are you a PKK member? FETÖ? I am telling you, you are being tracked.’

“‘When I searched for the man on Facebook, I saw his profile picture was a gun. I complained about the threat; however, a few weeks ago the prosecutor dropped the complaint,’ says Oğuz.

“Like many other Turkish-Swedes, Oğuz is sorry about the developments. He is convinced that he has been reported to the Turkish authorities as a traitor and that he would be arrested upon arrival in Turkey. ‘It is really annoying that my 3-year-old son could not visit his grandparents. However, it is also for him that I’m being quite open about my criticism. This is a critical period, and in the future my son is going to wonder “What did my father do in 2017?”’ Oğuz reminds that there are approximately 100,000 Turkish Swedes. He thinks Swedish mosques are part of Sweden and that more Swedish people should understand what is going on there. ‘Especially now, when Turkish mosques are becoming Turkey’s official representatives... Members of Turkish Religious Foundation mosques are forced to choose between loyalty to Sweden or the Turkish regime. This is a very dangerous development’.”¹⁵⁴

7. Defamation of Schools Seen as Affiliated with the Movement

There are three schools in Sweden that were set up by businesspeople seen as sympathetic to the movement, all of which are in the capital city of Stockholm. Two of them are primary schools and one is a high school. One of the primary schools is Gullvivaskolan, which is located in the southern part of the city, in Fruängen. The other is Dialogskolan, in Spånga, in the northern part of the city. The high school, Gullvivagymnasium, is situated in Tullinge. Most of the students are children of Turkish families. Dialogskolan has been active since 2008; Gullvivaskolan and Gullvivagymnasium have been in operation since 2009. In addition to the schools, there are supplementary schools, or education centers, in Stockholm and Göteborg.

7.1. Attempts to Intimidate the Staff

The most common harassment tactic employed by the Turkish government and its affiliates in Sweden is threatening people with not being able to go to Turkey and the risk of being arrested upon their arrival. The arrest of family members and seizure of assets in Turkey are also a part of this tactic.

154] “Erdogans kampanj sprider rädsla bland turksvenskar”, Dagens Nyheter, 1 April 2017, <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/erdogans-kampanj-sprider-radsla-bland-turksvenskar/>

For instance, on July 18, 2016, three days after the coup attempt, an email was sent to Gullvågsgymnasium from an address with the user name of 'haydar.ali.' The email address extension was "mit.com.tr," which gives the impression that it is linked to Turkey's National Intelligence Organization.¹⁵⁵ The email states: "You are a terrorist, you are members of FETÖ. Your details are being sent to intelligence units. Enjoy the new life that will start with your arrest upon your arrival in Turkey."

The school management filed a complaint with the Swedish Dialogue Police about the email. What is more important than the real identity of this person is the fact that the things referred to are actually taking place. In almost every country people working for organizations connected to the movement are arrested when they arrive in Turkey. And those who do not go to Turkey are being harassed in their countries of residence. In countries where the rule of law is not functioning well such as Pakistan, Malaysia¹⁵⁶, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Georgia, members of the Gülen movement are faced with ill treatment. Some of them are unlawfully arrested and returned to Turkey, while others are imprisoned in these countries or deported.

After these threats, some teachers in Sweden had to resign. The school administration told of one teacher crying when she felt she had to resign who said, "My heart is with you; however, I have to resign because of the pressure on my relatives." The case of Ercan Kargılı, who has dual Turkish-German citizenship, is an example of what would have happened to those who did not resign despite the pressure. Kargılı, the manager of the Lära För Livet (LFL - Education for Life) education center in Göteborg, experienced unlawful treatment in 2015. He was not allowed to enter Turkey at İstanbul Atatürk Airport and was deported to Sweden. He would have been arrested, but he had dual citizenship.

Kargılı spoke to SCF and narrated his experience: "I got on a plane with my friend to go to Turkey in 2015. At Atatürk Airport in İstanbul, they started questioning me about my identity at passport control, which was unusual. And then they said, 'You are banned for life from entering Turkey,' and did not allow me into my own country. I found a lawyer in Turkey who later had to leave the country as well. Nobody followed the case on my behalf. After a long process, we learnt from a person who works for the Turkish authorities that it was an administrative decision based on intelligence gathered on me. Later, my mother passed away and I could not go to her funeral in Turkey. I have been living in Sweden for years. I requested information from many authorities about my crime, but no one responded. Probably someone in this country profiled and reported me to the Turkish authorities."

155] Turkey's National Intelligence Organization's (MIT) website is www.mit.gov.tr.

156] The SCF's report titled "Erdogan's Long Arms: The Case of Malaysia" published in May, <http://stockholmcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Erdogans-Long-Arms-The-Case-Of-Malaysia.pdf>

This profiling sometimes turns into reporting people openly. For example, it was learnt that Harun Uzel, who the UETD’s representative in Göteborg, said to the AKP deputy for Burdur, Bayram Özçelik, who came to Göteborg on March 18, 2017 for an event: “The person named ... who is on the board of this education center still visits Turkey freely. Why is he allowed to enter the country? Please do what is needed.”¹⁵⁷

SCF investigators learned that the Göteborg police responded to the incidents with common sense. A police team is said to have visited the LFL education center. The police asked the staff about their situation and asked them to report any incidents such as threats and promised to do everything necessary. The Göteborg police investigated all the complaints and also displayed their disapproval of the incidents by visiting mosques and their associations. The police having taken the incidents seriously has prevented more tragic incidents from happening in Göteborg.

Turkish man Nuh Kibar asks his relative, Serap Çorap, to pull her kids from Swedish private school that is run by members of the Gülen movement.

7.2. Threats to Parents of the Students

As was made abundantly clear in a speech given on March 5, 2016 in Stockholm’s Handen neighborhood by UETD Chairman Özer Eken, who called on the Turkish community in Sweden to refrain from sending their children to schools linked to the Gülen movement, the intimidation campaign has taken its toll on students who attended these schools as well. Many students of Turkish origin had to change schools. Dialogskolan’s student numbers have dropped from 120 to 58 since the start of these campaigns. Five of its staff members, four of whom are teachers, have resigned. Gulvivaskolan’s student numbers have declined from 120 to 78 and two teachers have quit. The high school’s student numbers have remained the same.

The social media posts between families that send their children to the schools and those who do not demonstrate the level of pressure. Such pressure should not be underestimated in insular groups with high group identification like the Turkish community in Sweden and the rest of the Europe. For example, on August 4, 2016 Nuh Kibar addressed his relative, Serap Çorap, on Facebook and said: “Sister, I learnt that your children still study at these nasty people’s schools. I hope you will not send them there anymore. Those who do not benefit their



¹⁵⁷] Harun Uzel does not only target the Hizmet movement. He also calls Swedish MPs who support the Kurdish political movement ‘terrorists.’ For example, on 12 December 2016, on his Facebook page he said, “On the parliament and the streets of Sweden, there are thousands of PKK and ISIS members who came from the mountains.”

fatherland and religion do not benefit anyone.” In response Çorap commented, “I have always been a supporter of Tayyip, you know me,” and said her children used to go to these schools but no longer.

In this period, the Swedish media covered the profiling activities extensively. Radio Sweden reported on asylum seekers being profiled because of the schools to which they sent their children.¹⁵⁸ The experience of a man known only as “Harun,” a political asylum seeker who was an academic at one of the universities in Turkey shut down by the AKP government, was an example of this. It was reported that his child, who started studying in Malmö, was asked by a Turkish teacher questions like: “Which party did your father used to vote for in Turkey? Where do you live?” Harun told Radio Sweden: “We went to the head of the school to express our concern. We warned our kids. We told them not to say anything against the AKP or Erdoğan.”

Swedish TV channel SVT broadcast a report about Swedish-Turkish schools on December 18, 2016.¹⁵⁹ In a segment titled “Being labeled with terrorism... Hunting terrorists scare off students at Swedish school,” a school principal who spoke anonymously and whose face was blurred, talked to the TV channel. The report said children in Sweden were being affected by the coup in Turkey and that the school had lost almost half of its students. It also indicated that many students had said: “We actually do not want to change schools. We are happy here; however, we don’t dare stay here.” The principal said: “That is horrible. You can’t help but lose your temper and your hope. I think it is terrible that another country’s domestic politics is affecting students’ school life in Sweden.”

When asked what the staff, students and parents were afraid of, the head of the school said: “Being labeled as a terrorist... And if they go to Turkey, they will not be able to go to their homes. They are being threatened with this.”

The principal emphasized that people who are allegedly sympathetic to the Gülen movement are labeled as terrorists, adding: “Many of our staff members receive threatening emails... Just because they work at this school or send their children here, many of their relatives think these people are Gülen supporters, although we are not such a school. We are independent from religion and politics as a school. If this was a Gülen-linked school, I would not be the head of it.

“These incidents do not happen only in Sweden. In all European countries the schools are threatened and pressured. In Denmark a total of 500 students dropped out of 14 schools. I think Turkey’s political context is problematic in terms of democracy. And this affects Swedish citizens, their educational life and their

158] “Turkiska flyktingar i Sverige rädda”, Sveriges Radio, 29 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/gruppsida.aspx?programid=3437&grupp=23840&artikel=6661962>

159] “Terror Stämplad”, SVT, <https://www.svtplay.se/klipp/11581858/terrorjakt-skrammer-bort-elever-fran-svensk-skola>

opportunity to get an equal education. This is horrible!”

The Lära För Livet (LFL - Education for Life) education center in Göteborg, which is linked to the movement, feels the same pressure. They said the parents who send their children to LFL, which provides supplementary courses, receive threats such as “If you continue sending your children to that education center, we will report your names to the Turkish authorities. You will not be able to go to Turkey ever again!”

The managers of LFL spoke to SCF and said, “All the parents without exception are being targeted by this campaign of intimidation.” They said even parents who had sent their children to the center years ago were being checked. For example, a parent known only as ‘Fatih Ç.’ told SCF that he is being implicitly threatened: “When I was leaving the mosque after prayer someone asked me: ‘You don’t send your children there anymore, do you? Are you still in contact with them? If so, it will end badly for you, you know!’”

The staff of the education center is victimized by this intimidation as well. They are pressured and threatened. Their families have received chilling phone messages from pro-Erdogan people. Some people among AKP supporters in Göteborg call the families of the volunteers at the education center. One of the volunteers, who is identified only as Uğur B. for reasons of safety, said: “They find our family members in Sweden or Turkey and threaten them by saying, ‘Prevent your son from going to this education center and volunteering there; otherwise, you know it will end up badly both for him and you!’”

7.3. Eggs Thrown at the Education Center’s Clubhouse

Sometime these verbal attacks and threats turn into physical attacks. In October 2016, the clubhouse of the LFL Education Center in Göteborg, where the staff stay, was attacked with eggs that hit the clubhouse’s balcony. Although people who live in the clubhouse were worried about the situation escalating further, there has not been evidence of anything else happening.

7.4. Verbal Harassment of Erasmus Exchange Students

Even the Erasmus exchange students who came to study at universities in Sweden experienced hate speech. A female student who was in Göteborg told SCF that on

October 3, 2016 she was verbally harassed by someone telling her, “You are traitors, get the hell out of here!” She left Göteborg after the incident.

7.5. False complaints to Swedish authorities

Some Facebook users called on Turks in Sweden to report that the LFL education center in Göteborg had received illegal funds from the Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (Workers’ Educational Association, or ABF). After this call, some filed a complaints against LFL in order to discredit the institution. On November 15, 2016 an officer from the ABF called the manager of the education center and informed him that they were receiving complaints about them. It was discovered that the person who complained about the education center was an AKP supporter and businessman. Because the ABF has been inspecting the LFL for years, they did not believe the complaints and informed the LFL managers. The management of the education center took no further action.

8. Harassment of and Threats to Individuals

Not only organizations but also people who are known to be sympathizers of the Gülen movement are under constant pressure from the AKP’s long arm in Sweden. People have to live their lives under threat, intimidation and campaigns of terrorization. These are sometimes carried out by ordinary people who are Erdoğan fanatics, Turkish government institutions in Sweden such as the embassy and Diyanet or pro-Erdoğan institutions such as the UETD.

This harassment campaign has even gone to targeting private residences as well. For example, in November 2016, a torn-apart copy of Fethullah Gülen’s book “Prisma” was left in front of the house of A.K., a member of the movement living in Göteborg. It was intended to make him feel uneasy and force him to cut his ties to the movement.

Harassment of and threats to individuals can be listed under the following headings:

8.1. Threatening Them with a Ban on Going to Turkey and Seizure of Assets

One of the most common problems of Gülen movement sympathizers who have been living in Sweden for years is not being able to go to Turkey and their families

in Turkey being targeted by the witch-hunt. This could be due to a fear of being detained or arrested, seizure of their assets or a ban on leaving the country. Because of that, many of them have decided not to go to Turkey especially after July 15, 2016, when a mass persecution of the movement was launched. They do not know what would happen when going through immigration in Turkey.

A Turkish Swedish citizen living in Stockholm known only as “Okan” says: “I learnt from my AKP supporter friends that the embassy has profiling lists of all of us. One of my friends said he saw my name on the list. These lists are sent to Turkey. The police at the Turkish border also have these lists. Because of that I decided not to go to Turkey this year. If I go, I will probably be arrested.”

A businessman from Göteborg who did not want to reveal his name said: “My AKP supporter friends told me that if I go to Turkey, I will be arrested at the border. That’s why I did not go.” Ercan Kargılı, the manager of the Lära För Livet (LFL) education center in Göteborg, was not allowed to enter Turkey in 2015 with no reason given and was sent back to Sweden from İstanbul Atatürk Airport. Kargılı was not even able to attend his mother’s funeral. The campaign of intimidation has been going on since even before then failed coup.

News broadcast on SVT on December 18, 2016 covered this issue. A manager from one of the Swedish-Turkish schools said, while concealing his face and name: “Personnel, students and parents are afraid of being labeled as a terrorist... And if they go to Turkey, they will not be able to return to their homes. They are being threatened with this.”¹⁶⁰

For this reason, there are people whose relatives in Turkey have passed away, but they could not even attend their funerals. Alparslan Yılmaz is one of them. Yılmaz who is both a Swedish and a Turkish citizen, used to be a teacher in Turkey. But after July 15, 2016 he left the country and came to Sweden. His mother, Naziye Yılmaz, died in Antalya on July 7, 2017. However, Yılmaz, who lives in Stockholm, could not attend her funeral because of the concern of being arrested. Yılmaz described his experience to SCF: “Like anyone would have been, I was very upset by losing my mother. My heart was in pain, and I wept. It was very upsetting not to be able to attend her funeral and say goodbye to her for the last time.”

Another example is the experience of a movement sympathizer identified only as “Hasan.” He could not go to his mother’s funeral, either. He told SCF: “My mother passed away last spring (if I give the exact month I might be identified). But we could not go to my mom’s funeral because my family and I know that there is a profiling list created by the embassy. I am sure my name is on that list. If I go [to Turkey] I would not be allowed to enter the country or would be detained and arrested.

160] “Terror Stämplad”, SVT, <https://www.svtplay.se/klipp/11581858/terrorjakt-skrammer-bort-elever-fran-svensk-skola>

Because of that I could not attend the funeral.”

Hasan, who was almost crying when he was talking about not being able to bid his mother farewell, said: “One of the duties is for us to attend the funerals of our mothers and fathers. However, I was prevented from doing that. It is emotionally very heavy. It cannot be expressed in words. I could not perform my last duty for my mother. I could not scatter soil on her grave. Some family members need our support, but we cannot go. One cannot understand it without experiencing it first-hand.”

8.2. Reporting to Turkey

In addition, there are people who are being directly reported to the authorities in Turkey. One of them is Swedish-Turkish citizen Hasan G. When he visited his hometown in Konya province, Hasan G. learned that he had been reported. He went to the Konya Courthouse and discovered that he had been reported by Osman İpek, who works as mu’adhin (or muezzin in Turkish, referring to a person who makes the call to prayer in the mosque) at the Diyanet’s Fittja mosque in Stockholm. İpek had worked with Hasan G. in the past and was an acquaintance. When he returned to Sweden, he found İpek and asked him why he reported him to the Turkish authorities. Hasan G. claims that İpek said: “I reported 15 people including you, and five of them are now in prison.”

SCF contacted İpek by phone to ask some questions. Although he denied reporting anybody, he kept swearing and cursing at the Gülen movement on the phone, confirming his hostility towards the group. The conversation between SCF and İpek was as follows:

- Hello, is this Osman İpek?
- Yes
- I am calling from the Stockholm Center for Freedom. We are writing a report about discrimination and hate crimes. There are some claims about you. It is alleged that you reported some Swedish Turkish citizens to Turkish authorities. Is that true?
- Is the person I am talking right now a FETÖ member or a PKK member or a traitor? I will question those who were questioned by the judges and prosecutors in my country [Turkey]. When it comes to that person, he asked me who did it and claimed that I reported him [to Turkish authorities]. I told him that if I had known he was connected to these people, I assure you I would not even have let him enter our mosque. He knows this as well. I would not let these kinds of people come into the Fittja mosque. It is an Islamic house

Osman İpek of the Diyanet’s Fittja mosque in Stockholm has reportedly informed the Turkish government about members of the Gülen movement in Sweden.



connected with the Diyanet. It is not a place for a FETÖ bastard. He knows this very well, and you know it as well. When it comes to reporting that person -- I worked at his father's shop for a year. He invited me to FETÖ meetings. I was having some problems at the time and asked him to leave me alone. I said I do not want to go to this kind of place, and I didn't go. When he asked me after July 15, I said: 'I know your father well, and he is not that kind of person. But if he were, I would not have cared even he was a sultan. I never forgive those who betray our fatherland.' After the prayer in the mosque he came to me and said things like 'You reported me.' I said no, brother, I did not report you. If I did, I would have done it with documents. Secondly, this place is linked to the Turkish state. If you are that kind of person, you would never be allowed in this place. You know this quite well. And he said yes. I said then why are you claiming that I reported you? 'Let God damn whoever reported me,' he said. I said then go and say this to whoever reported you, why do you come to me?

- So, you did not report him?

- Did I report this person [to Turkey] as supporting FETÖ... Are they stupid? Seventy million people, everyone would report each other as FETÖ members... They ask for evidence. If you do not have any evidence, they ask you to prove it.

- It is claimed that you said you reported 15 people and that five of them are in prison.

- No, none of them are in prison... First of all, when the July 15 coup attempt happened I was in prison.

- For what reason?

- It is my concern, not yours. I had some police cases both in Sweden and Turkey.

- Was it something like robbery?

- Pardon me?

- Were you arrested for robbery?

- It is what FETÖ members would do; we would not. We fight for our nation and fatherland. It is my personal matter, none of your business. Secondly, there is a saying that it's the injured dog that barks. I am telling this person: If you hit below the belt, then don't moan about it. There is a Turkey dimension to this. Then when Turkey...

İpek stopped talking here and threateningly asked the SCF researcher's name. After the researcher said his name İpek insisted on learning his surname. When the SCF researcher asked him 'You said you would not let them into the mosque. Are you the guard at the mosque?' He responded: 'No I am not the guard. I am a citizen of the Republic of Turkey.'

- Are mosques not open to everyone?

- The mosques are not open to apostates or traitors.

- How do you decide who is an apostate or a traitor? Is there any court order?

- The court orders are not important, dude.

- What is important then? How do you decide?

- ...

İpek hung up the phone instead of answering the question.

8.3. Preventing People from Going to the Mosques

People who maintain contact with the movement are harassed by the Turks who support the AKP even in the mosques. As mentioned above in the case of Osman İpek, some arbitrary and discriminatory attitudes exist, such as preventing people from going to mosques.

For example, H.C., a businessman living in Göteborg, experienced an incident a week after the coup attempt. After the Friday prayer on July 22, 2016, Erdoğan supporter İ.S said: “Let us know whether you are still connected to this education center.¹⁶¹ If so, we will fulfill our duty to our fatherland!” in an intimidating and threatening way. The businessman responded to him but did not take any further action.

The concept “duty to the fatherland” is an open-ended term, and for Turks it connotes violent or forceful actions. It could even refer to assassination or beating someone up to intimidate them. In its softest form, it would mean reporting someone to the authorities in Turkey. It is a well-known fact that people allegedly linked to the movement in Göteborg and elsewhere in Sweden or Europe are profiled and that these lists are sent regularly to Turkey.

R.K., a former judge who wanted to attend the funeral of a relative at the Diyanet mosque in Göteborg, had to leave the mosque because of the hostile attitude of AKP supporters there.

Similar incidents happen in the Diyanet’s mosques in Stockholm as well. The experiences of an asylum seeker named Kadir was reported by Radio Sweden.¹⁶² Businessman Kadir left Turkey soon after July 15 and sought asylum in Sweden. What he experienced proves the level of the hateful discourse of Erdoğan’s regime. Kadir, whose assets in Turkey were unlawfully seized, is afraid of Erdoğan’s long arm in Sweden. He went to a mosque with his friends and narrated what happened next: “There were seven or eight people sitting there. When they understood we were sympathizers of the Gülen movement, they shouted ‘Terrorists’ at us, and the chairman of the mosque association shouted at us ‘Go to hell!’ We had to leave the mosque without praying. We no longer go to the Turkish mosque for Friday prayers. We go to Bosnian, Afghan and Arab mosques, or we do not do Friday prayers.”¹⁶³

161] The education center named Lära För Livet (LFL- Education for Life), which was established by members of the Hizmet movement.

162] “Turkiska flyktingar i Sverige rädda”, Sveriges Radio, 29 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/gruppsida.aspx?programid=3437&grupp=23840&artikel=6661962>

163] “Turkiska flyktingar i Sverige rädda”, Sveriges Radio, 29 March 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/gruppsida.aspx?programid=3437&grupp=23840&artikel=6661962>

Another example is what happened at the Fittja Diyanet mosque when Dagens Nyheter went there prior to the April 16 constitutional referendum to ask people's opinions.¹⁶⁴ Menderes Alçı, a 58-year-old taxi driver, told a DN reporter, referring to members of the movement, "They do not dare come to the mosque." Alçı, who is also a member of the administrative board of the mosque association, labeled Gülen supporters "enemies of Turkey" and added: "I know at least a hundred people who used to come to the mosque before the coup attempt, and now they have stopped coming. If they are innocent, why don't they come here? It is an indicator to me that they are guilty."

A further example was a DN interview with two Gülen-supporting businessmen who fled Turkey for Sweden because of being under threat.¹⁶⁵ Both of the businessmen concealed their names during the interview, and one of them summarized his experience as follows: "The imam was preaching, talking about Mr. Gülen and said: 'The coup was plotted by Fethullah Gülen and his supporters. And if there are any Gülen supporters here, I invite them to admit it.' My friend and I were paralyzed with fear. We checked the people around us to see if there was anybody who knew we were Gülen supporters. The best thing to do was to remain sitting there silently. It would have seemed suspicious if we had left the mosque."

An elderly Turkish man living in Göteborg experienced a similar thing. This Turkish Swede, whose name was kept anonymous, spoke to DN: "When I went to the Turkish Diyanet mosque in Hissingen a few days after the coup, I heard a very politicized sermon. The imam began his sermon talking about 'the elephant incident.'¹⁶⁶ Then he linked it to the coup attempt in Turkey. He said Fetö was behind the coup and that Erdoğan would defeat the terrorists with the help of God. He called us Gülen sympathizers putschists and claimed that we are not real Muslims. I wanted to stand up against him, but I did not want to argue with people in the mosque. I stayed quiet. I have not dared to go to the mosque since then."¹⁶⁷

164] "Erdogans kampanj sprider rädsla bland turksvenskar", Dagens Nyheter, 1 April 2017, <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/erdogans-kampanj-sprider-radsla-bland-turksvenskar/>

165] "Erdogans kampanj sprider rädsla bland turksvenskar", Dagens Nyheter, 1 April 2017, <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/erdogans-kampanj-sprider-radsla-bland-turksvenskar/>

166] According to Islamic sources this incident happened in 571 in Mecca. Yemen's leader Ebrehe b. Sabbah el-Eşrem established a big army to raid Mecca to destroy it and make the Sana'a the trade capital. He was expected to seize Mecca and demolish the Kaaba with his army of 60,000 people and many elephants. However, when his army entered Mecca a different species of bird that hadn't been seen before appeared and attacked Ebrehe's army. When these birds, called Ebabil, dropped the stones they were carrying on the soldiers, the army was destroyed. In Islamic history it is known as 'the elephant incident' and in the Quran, surah al-fil narrates the incident.

167] "Erdogans kampanj sprider rädsla bland turksvenskar", Dagens Nyheter, 1 April 2017, <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/erdogans-kampanj-sprider-radsla-bland-turksvenskar/>

9. Slander, Threats and Assaults Against Asylum Seekers from Turkey

9.1. Internet Posts

Turkish asylum seekers are victimized on pro-AKP websites and in social media posts as well as on the streets.

The pro-AKP Turkish website *İsveç Gündemi* (The Agenda of Sweden) shared a *Svenska Dagbladet* report published October 5, 2016 with a comment: “176 TRAITORS! FETÖ MEMBERS SEEK ASYLUM IN SWEDEN.”¹⁶⁸ The report, titled “176 FETÖ related asylum applications in Sweden,” states: “SVD, one of Sweden’s major newspapers, wrote that in the last few months 176 people have come from Turkey and sought refuge in Sweden.” AKP supporters comprise the website’s audience. A day later, the AKP *İsveç Birliği* (AKP Sweden Union) on Facebook issued the same warning, saying: “Traitors have started to flee to Sweden. We need to be very careful.”

İsveç Gündemi shared a fabricated story about exiled Turkish journalist Abdullah Bozkurt, who wrote a column for an English-language website called *Turkish Minute* under the headline “Embassies no longer safe in Turkey” on December 16, 2016.¹⁶⁹ In his op-ed Bozkurt explained how demonstrations by radical Islamist groups in front of embassies were manipulated by the AKP and the intelligence agency, MİT, and warned there could be provocative attacks during these demonstrations. Bozkurt said on his personal Twitter account after Ambassador Andrei Karlov’s assassination on December 19, 2016: “I wrote three days ago why foreign embassies are no longer safe in Turkey.”

After Bozkurt’s tweet, AKP partisans in Turkey started a lynch campaign on social media with slander and threats, and some even linked Bozkurt to the assassination. Moreover, false news was circulated such as how the assassin, police officer Mert Altıntaş, lived in Bozkurt’s house.¹⁷⁰ Bozkurt had to share his residence registration from the official e-devlet (e-state) website which showed that his home is located in Serhat neighborhood of Ankara’s Yenimahalle district. The assassin’s home address, as identified in a leave of absence document circulated in the pro-government media, showed that he had lived in an apartment in the Demetevler

168] “İsveç’e FETÖ bağlantılı 176 iltica başvurusu”, *isvecgundemi.com*, 5 Ekim 2016, <https://www.isvecgundemi.com/gundem/isvec-e-feto-baglanti-176-iltica-basvurusu-h7627.html>

169] “ [OPINION] Embassies no longer safe in Turkey”, *www.turkishminute.com*, 16 December 2016, <https://www.turkishminute.com/2016/12/16/opinion-embassies-no-longer-safe-turkey/>

170] “Suikastçi, FETÖ’cü Abdullah Bozkurt’un evinde kalmış”, *TGRT TV*, 20 Aralık 2016, <http://www.tgrthaber.com.tr/gundem/suikastci-fetocu-abdullah-bozkurtun-evinde-kalmis-156033>



Harun Uzel,
the UETD's
representative
in Göteborg,
targeted
Turkish
journalist
Abdullah
Bozkurt

neighborhood.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, the false news continued to be circulated by AKP fanatics. İsveç Gündemi targeted him as well and noted that the Turkish journalist had applied for asylum in Sweden and pointed to Bozkurt as a target.¹⁷²

İsveç Gündemi's story titled "Pay attention to this tweet on ambassador by a FETÖ member writer who is in Sweden" dated December 19, 2016 was part of this slander campaign. The website emphasized that Bozkurt lived in Sweden and said: "Former Ankara correspondent of Today's Zaman Abdullah Bozkurt wrote a column on Turkish Minute about how ambassadors are not safe in Turkey just three days before the incident. It is claimed that Bozkurt moved to Sweden after the July 15 coup attempt and sought refuge."¹⁷³

9.2. Refusal to Rent Out Houses

One of the biggest problems facing asylum seekers who are seen as linked to the movement is finding accommodation in Sweden's competitive housing market. Although they often sublet places at inflated prices, even that option may not be available for many in the movement because of the Erdoğan regime's campaign of vilification that has impacted the Turkish community in Sweden. UETD official Gülsen Vatansever openly called on the Turkish community to not lease any place to Turkish government critics and members of the Gülen movement.

A teacher from Turkey identified only as "Ismail" spoke to SCF about discrimination he experienced while trying to rent an apartment, saying:

"On 22 March 2017 we found a house in Spånga. The landlord was Murat Yağcı, a Turk. He said, 'You can move in tomorrow.' Then the next morning, at 7.16 a.m. he texted me. Our conversation went as follows:

- Brother, don't get me wrong, but are you a member of the Hizmet [Gülen] movement?

- I don't get you wrong, brother. Yes.

- So, you are a member of Fethullah Gülen's community?

171] "Yalancıların mumu yatsıyı göremedi!", aktifhaber.com, 20 Aralık 2016, <http://aktifhaber.com/analiz/yalancilar-in-mumu-yatsiyi-goremedi-h87016.html>

172] "İsveç'teki FETÖ'cü yazarın büyükelçi tweetine dikkat!", isvecgundemi.com, 19 Aralık 2016, <https://www.isvecgundemi.com/gundem/isvec-teki-feto-cu-yazarin-buyukelci-tweetine-dikkat-h8179.html>

173] "İsveç'teki FETÖ'cü yazarın büyükelçi tweetine dikkat!", isvecgundemi.com, 19 Aralık 2016, <https://www.isvecgundemi.com/gundem/isvec-teki-feto-cu-yazarin-buyukelci-tweetine-dikkat-h8179.html>

- Yes, brother
- Then sorry, brother
- So, you won't rent me your house?
- No thanks.

A female asylum seeker in Göteborg had to move house because of a verbal attack by AKP supporters in the laundry room. Identifying herself only as “Fatma,” she told SCF about her experience: “I came from Turkey with my family, and we settled down in Göteborg. We applied for asylum. I went to the laundry room where we live. There were a group of Turkish women who were Erdoğan fanatics, and they threatened me, saying, ‘You are terrorists; we will not let you stay here!’ and shouted at me. I told my husband about the incident. We were very upset and worried. We decided to move out of there and found another house.”

Another instance of housing discrimination took place in September 2017 in the Fittja district of the Botkyrka Municipality, where 33-year-old B.T. and his family were refused an apartment lease when the owner realized he was affiliated with the Gülen movement. “The woman who owned the place started asking questions that turned into an interrogation. She was asking whether we faced an entry/exit ban in Turkey, when we came to Sweden, etc. She eventually said she would not want to have anything to do with traitors and told us that she wouldn't lease the apartment to us,” he told SCF.

B.T.'s saga was still not over, however. Some time later, the same woman saw B.T.'s wife on the street and asked her whether they were able to find an apartment. “When my wife told her that we had not yet been able to do so, she responded by saying: ‘You will never be able to lease one from now on.’ When I learned about this harassment, I went to the police to file a complaint, on September 25, 2017. The police launched a probe. I was later summoned by Säpo, on February 16, 2018, for an interview and was asked to identify this woman. They were interested in learning how pro-AKP people collect intelligence on critics. I think the Swedish authorities take such complaints very seriously,” he said.

9.3. Threats in Refugee Camps

Members of the movement who live in refugee camps experience similar threats from time to time. An asylum seeker calling himself “Kemal” who had settled in the refugee camp in Alingsås experienced such things. Kemal, who came from Turkey and applied for asylum, said he argued with another Turk in the camp and said the person threatened him: “I know you are a member of FETÖ. I am going to report you to the authorities. I am going to do what is needed!” Kemal said he felt uneasy because of this threat, so he complained to Swedish officials and was moved to the camp in Herrljunga.

9.4. Interpreters' Attitudes

An asylum seeker named M.G. had her first interview with Migrationsverket on October 25, 2016 and said she was a member of the Gülen movement and told of the problems she faced in Turkey. A woman named Hatice was interpreting the interview over the phone. She was heard saying to someone next to her, “FETÖ, FETÖ.” M.G. was disturbed by this labeling and requested that the interview be stopped. The staff member who was conducting the interview was understanding

and asked M.G. whether “FETÖ” was something bad. M.G. explained what it meant and said: “They use it in Turkey to call us terrorists. We are not terrorists.” The Migrationsverket officer asked her “Who calls you this name?” M.G. said “President Erdoğan.” And then the Migrationsverket officer thanked her and said: “We expect you to show this determination everywhere. This is a democratic country. We are going to complain about the interview on your behalf.” She was given an interview appointment for the next day. The officer told her: “I started the proceedings. What the interpreter did was against Swedish law. I reported what happened and requested that they not work with that interpreter again.”



Havva Demir, a Turkish interpreter in Malmö, called on people on her Facebook page to report people linked to the Gülen movement. She shared the presidency hotline on her Facebook account, stating that Turkish government even rewards those who expose some.

M.G. told SCF: “When I heard that from the interpreter during the interview I did not know what to do because I am not familiar with the country and its laws. I did not know how to react. But I had to leave my country because of that word. It was traumatic for me. I felt I could not continue the interview.”

Havva Demir, an interpreter in Malmö, called on people on her Facebook page to report people linked to the Hizmet movement. Despite being an interpreter, sharing such posts does not comply with the ethical standards of her job. Demir often shares pro-Erdoğan and AKP posts on her social media account without hiding her animosity towards the Gülen movement. After the July 15 coup attempt she shared the presidency hotline on her Facebook account, stating: “Important Announcement! Report the Fethullahists to this number.”

On July 21, 2016, on her personal Facebook account, she shared a poster calling for a boycott of brands allegedly linked to the Gülen movement. The poster was titled “Fetöş Empire” and had a picture of the pope on which Fethullah Gülen’s face was photoshopped. Various brand logos appeared on the poster. Demir shared the photo with a note: “It is time to boycott... If you do not buy anything from them, I swear they will be bankrupt within a maximum 2 months.”

On July 20, 2016, on her Facebook page, she shared a hotline that was set up to enable people to report members of the Gülen movement. On January 20, 2017 she

shared a cartoon showing Fethullah Gülen being thrown out of a tank like a rag doll. On March 26, she shared a photo of a tea kettle on which RTE (Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's initials) and "Yes"¹⁷⁴ were written. She put a note under the photo: "Would not you drink this tea? Would it ever be enough? Don't you think the person who drinks it is healed and the one who prepares it derives pleasure?"

Havva Karanlık Aydın, who was mentioned above in the section on the Diyanet, is one of the interpreters in Malmö who works during interviews at Migrationsverket. She is a fanatic, sharing on her Facebook page, "It is once more understood that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the greatest man of this century." She requested board member Bilal Karabudak's dismissal from the mosque association because of his statements in an interview. Therefore, it raises questions on how she would treat asylum seekers who are Gülen sympathizers in interviews. Aydın said: "If there is anyone on my page who has any sympathy for FETO, leave my page right now; you are APOSTATES! Even if my dead father were to come back and tell me he was a member of FETÖ, I would say he is an apostate and a traitor. Thus, my traitor relatives are APOSTATES as well. Keep away from me. THAT'S IT!"

On April 17, 2017, again on her Facebook page, she shared a post addressing Tayyip Erdoğan: "I have a request for our respected President. Please, cleanse the party [AKP] of FETÖ members immediately." Interestingly enough, this hate-mongering person is a member of the Green Party in Malmö and disseminates anti-EU propaganda to the Turkish community. On April 25, 2017, she shared on Facebook: "... I think [Turkey] should say we do not want to be a member [of the EU] and freeze the process forever. The EU has already collapsed; can't Turkey see that? Is Turkey going to be a member of a collapsed EU and take care of Europe with its taxes? ... I am calling on all Turkish people: Never, ever, join the EU."



İbrahim Gicvan

9.5. Security Officer at Migrationsverket on Social Media

İbrahim Gicvan, who works as a security officer at the Migrationsverket office in Malmö, called on people to report Gülen movement sympathizers. On August 13, 2016, he said on his Facebook page, "European Turks, do not hesitate, report Fethullahists to these numbers," and shared a poster with a presidency hotline on it. And he put a note saying, "This is where I stand."

9.6. Gunfire Attack on a House in Malmö

Orhan C., an asylum seeker who lives on Widells Street in Malmö's Rosengård

174] At the constitutional referendum on 16 April 2017 Erdoğan supporters voted 'Yes' for the amendment.

neighborhood, found a bullet when he came home on January 30, 2017 at 11.30 p.m. along with a hole in the glass.¹⁷⁵ He immediately called the police and complained. The police came to his home and investigated; however, the perpetrator is still unknown. Orhan told SVT: “We are lucky we were not at home at the time because where the bullet hit on the wall is where we generally sit.”¹⁷⁶

Police officer Lars Förstell said: “The attack must have happened in the last six hours. This is vandalism and a violation of the law on firearms.” According to police there was no threat to the people living in the house, and there was no visible motivation behind the attack. Orhan was shocked by the attack, saying: “I have not had any threats from anyone. We do not know who was behind it.” No further information concerning the incident is available.

9.7. Harassment in a Café and Turkish Restaurant

This incident took place at a Turkish restaurant in Göteborg’s Hissingen neighborhood in May 2017. Asylum seeker Hasan Yakut (not his real name) had been living in Göteborg for approximately nine months. He took his family out to dinner at a Turkish restaurant that was close to their house. He told his story to SCF investigators:

“We noticed some of the waiters were Turkish and were speaking Turkish among themselves; however, without much discussion we ordered our food and were waiting for it to arrive. Within approximately five minutes they understood we were Turkish because our kids were talking, and a 40-year-old man came to our table to speak with us. He rudely asked: ‘Dude, you must be new here. Who are you? What are you doing? Why are you here?’ As we had experienced similar incidents before we were not surprised. We said we were medical doctors and that we came to Göteborg University Hospital for education.

In response he said, ‘OK, then, doctor, welcome.’ I asked him why he asked that. And he said, ‘Doctor, this place has recently become full of FETÖ member dogs, so we have to be careful about new people,’ and left our table. After this unpleasant encounter, we ate our food quickly and left. We never went back there again.”

A Turkish asylum seeker whose identity is being withheld by SCF for security reasons reported that he was secretly photographed and surveilled by an unidentified man while sitting in the Glasscafe coffeehouse located in Skärholmen. The victim, a

175] “Ny skjutning i Malmö – boende hittade kula”, SVT, 31 January 2017, <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/skane/ny-skottlossning-i-malmo-boende-hittade-kula-nar-de-kom-hem>

176] “Ny skjutning i Malmö – boende hittade kula”, SVT, 31 January 2017, <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/skane/ny-skottlossning-i-malmo-boende-hittade-kula-nar-de-kom-hem>

member of the Gülen movement, said he was sitting in the café and reading a book at around 15:30 on December 24, 2017. “I was startled by a noise on the other side of the shop and saw the owner was yelling at somebody. Then he came to me and said, ‘I shouted at the man because he was taking your picture and recording your movements without asking you.’ He told me the man was about 60 years old,” he explained.

“I was shocked and became concerned about my physical safety. The incident also took a toll on me psychologically,” he added.

The victim filed a complaint with the police, and an investigation was launched into the incident. The café owner also gave a statement to the police.

10. Oppression of Zaman Scandinavia and Its Staff

Zaman Scandinavia was a newspaper that was affiliated with Turkey’s Zaman newspaper, at one time the country’s highest circulating daily that was unlawfully taken over by the government in March 2016 and shut down altogether in July 2016. The Zaman Scandinavia edition started its weekly publication in 2008 out of Denmark after it was split off from Zaman Europe, which was launched in Germany in 1993. It had been delivered to readers in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland and mainly catered to the Turkish diaspora community.

The paper had to cease publication in November 2016 when their readers and advertisers became the target of slander, harassment and intimidation.

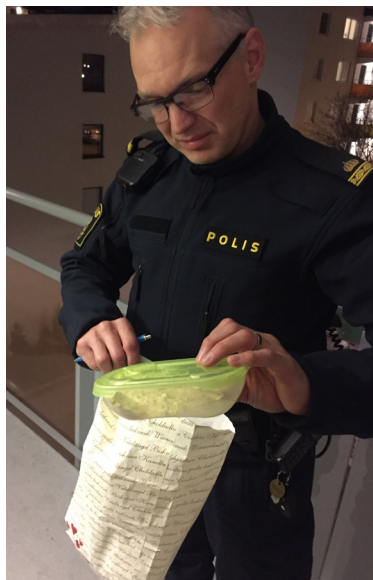
10.1. Lost Readers and Advertisers

A businessman who advertised on Zaman Scandinavia’s website told SCF: “I work with a wide range of people. My customers are from various backgrounds including AKP supporters. Some AKP supporters who saw my company’s advertisement on Zaman’s website warned me and said, ‘Do you still support them?’ To be honest I was worried. I called the managers of the newspaper and said to them, ‘Please forgive me, but I want to withdraw my company’s advertisement from your website’.”

Kamil Subaşı, the former editor-in-chief of Zaman Scandinavia, told SCF: “Our newspaper had a total of 11 staff and around 3,000 readers. The target audience was people of Turkish origin living in these countries. Our news was about Turkey and Scandinavia. Our mission and vision were the same as Zaman in Turkey, which was

known for its links to the movement. Our publication always encouraged education, peace, intercultural dialogue, rights and freedoms. Moreover, we aimed to contribute to the integration of the Turkish community in Scandinavia. However, in the summer of 2016 we lost many of our readers and sponsors; hence, we ceased the print edition in November 2016. We continued an online publication for a while, but on January 31, 2017, we went bankrupt so had to shut it down.”

Zaman Scandinavia reporters were targeted by AKP fanatics on social media during that period. For example, on July 21, 2017 someone with the ‘@Expatriate_child’ username tweeted: “You are bastards! When you die people are going to pray with gratitude.” In another tweet he said: “You are going to become extinct one by one. You are like microbes on a body.”



10.2. Leaving a Suspicious Package on a Reporter’s Doorstep

A journalist who worked as Zaman Scandinavia’s Sweden reporter told SCF how he faced harassment. His name was withheld for security reasons.

“On the night of March 21, 2017, around 9:30 p.m. my door had been punched hard four or five times. We had guests and were sitting with our kids. I quickly opened the door after about three or four seconds; however, nobody was there. A package had been left on my doorstep. Inside it was a transparent plastic box that was half wrapped. I called the police without touching the package. Two police officers arrived and investigated the package. There was powder inside the box. The police officers said it might have been left there to intimidate me. They asked me if I had received any threats. I said I was a journalist and sometimes wrote critically about the Turkish government, which annoys the AKP supporters here. I received

threats on social media but had not taken them seriously. The police officers told me that it was really important for me to document them. A few days later I printed out the messages and reported them to the police. They gave me the name of the officer on the case and asked me to report any kind of threat I receive in the future. I am in contact with them.”

11. Other Dissidents Are Targeted as Well

The long arm of Erdoğan targets not only the Gülen movement; other critics were also fair game in this intimidation campaign in Sweden as well as in other countries. For instance, the former Sweden correspondent for the Hürriyet newspaper,

A journalist who worked as Zaman Scandinavia’s Sweden reporter received a suspicious package left at his door. The incident was reported to the police.

Tandoğan Uysal, posted the following message on his personal Facebook page on April 18, 2017:

“I have learned that I am among those who have been profiled in Sweden. We have been hearing for a while that AKP supporters in Stockholm profile people. These rumors have grown bigger and bigger. I just received a phone call and learned that I am among those who are profiled. I am a supporter of Atatürk and forever a defender of the secular republic. It’s the injured dog that barks the most. So I do not care at all. I am a supporter of Atatürk, the republic, I am secular and always a democrat. One time the PKK blacklisted me, and I was on the PKK’s death target list in Europe. I am still here. I just came back from a visit to Turkey. Guys, just because a couple of bandits who don’t know their place reported me, it doesn’t mean anything. When you were on your mother’s lap, I was doing gymnastics with death. Is this profiling really going on? I am calling on Turkey’s Ambassador in Stockholm, Mr. Kaya Türkmen, and request an explanation from him about these rumors of profiling by AKP supporters.”

Fikret Çeşmeli, a well-known social democrat musician in Sweden, shared the following message on his Facebook page on February 21, 2017:

“I want to share an interesting thing that happened to me. One of my Facebook friends called me and said: ‘An advisor of an MP called me from Ankara [I know my friend knows MPs and cooperates with an AKP mayor] and said: “One of your friends named Fikret Çeşmeli shared posts against our President. Who are you friends with? Is he a CHP supporter?” ‘No’ I said, ‘I am impartial. Moreover, I share other people’s posts; sometimes I add my own opinions, too, without insulting anyone. This is not a crime.’ My friend continued: ‘I swear this is going to risk my job in Turkey.’ I said to him, ‘You better unfriend me on Facebook, then’.”

Whether or not there is such an advisor, what is clear is that there is a group of people in Turkey and among the diaspora who aim to intimidate dissidents, critics and opponents with threats. President Erdoğan’s attitudes and speeches have energized this campaign of fear. What is also significant is that both in Turkey and among Turks abroad, this kind of rhetoric seems normal, and most people remain silent to avoid negative repercussions.

12. Violations Targeting Swedish Journalists and Activists

The harassment and intimidation campaign of the Turkish government has targeted Swedish journalists and activists as well. For example, Hamza Yalçın, a Turkish writer

who became a Swedish citizen in 2006, was arrested in Spain on August 3, 2017 at Turkey's request on an Interpol Red Notice.¹⁷⁷ Turkey's state news agency Anadolu (AA) reported that Yalçın was charged with insulting Turkish President Erdoğan in an article published in a Turkish magazine in April. Yalçın was also charged with disseminating terrorist propaganda.¹⁷⁸ It means that even AA, which is part of the long arm of Erdoğan, admitted that Yalçın was arrested over his journalistic activities. On the Interpol request, they claimed Yalçın was "supporting terrorism."¹⁷⁹

Yalçın writes for Odak, whose publications have been left wing and critical since the 1990s. Yalçın has lived in Sweden since 1984 and is a Swedish citizen and a member of the Swedish Writers' Union.¹⁸⁰ He went to Barcelona on holiday and was arrested on August 3, 2017 when he was on his way to the United Kingdom from Barcelona-El Prat Airport.¹⁸¹

After Yalçın's arrest a solidarity committee was established in Sweden. The committee issued a press release and called on the Swedish government to take steps for Yalçın's release.¹⁸² The Swedish government acted to secure his release and announced that he was provided with a lawyer and that a request had been sent to the authorities to allow diplomats to visit him in prison.¹⁸³

Swedish journalists are also victimized periodically by violations of media freedom in Turkey. For example, SVT Nyheter reporters Stefan Asberg and Niclas Berglund were detained on November 19, 2016 and taken to a police counterterrorism unit because they were recording in the vicinity of their hotel, which was also close to the 7th Army Corps headquarters in Diyarbakır. The two reporters were released after interrogation without any further formal proceedings. Ingrid Thörnqvist, the editor of STV Nyheter foreign news, said: "This doesn't happen only to our reporters. It happens there every day."¹⁸⁴

Another Swedish journalist, Sarah Olsson, was detained on June 29, 2013

177] "Türkiye'nin aradığı Hamza Yalçın İspanya'da yakalandı", Anadolu Ajansı, 7 Ağustos 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/turkiyenin-aradigi-hamza-yalcin-ispanyada-yakalandi/878212>

178] "Türkiye'nin aradığı Hamza Yalçın İspanya'da yakalandı", Anadolu Ajansı, 7 Ağustos 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/turkiyenin-aradigi-hamza-yalcin-ispanyada-yakalandi/878212>

179] "Swedish-Turkish writer seized on terror charges", Radio Sweden, 8 August 2017, <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6752427>

180] "Yazar Hamza Yalçın İspanya'da tutuklandı", Evrensel, 7 Ağustos 2017, <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/328690/yazar-hamza-yalcin-ispanyada-tutuklandi>

181] Ibid.

182] Ibid.

183] "Hamza Yalçın: Sweden assists detained Turkish reporter", BBC, 9 August 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40874528>

184] "Two Swedish journalists detained in southeast Turkey", thelocal.se, 19 November 2016, <https://www.thelocal.se/20161119/two-swedish-journalists-detained-in-southeast-turkey-report>



Ten human rights activists, including Swedish citizen Ali Gharavi, gathered for a workshop on İstanbul's Büyükkada on July 5, 2017. However, Turkish police raided the workshop and detained the 10 activists.

of them on July 18, including Gharavi.¹⁸⁶ The other arrestees were German citizen Peter Steudtner, an information security advisor and human rights activist; İdil Eser, the director of Amnesty International Turkey; Özlem Dalkıran from the Citizens' Assembly; and Günel Kurşun and Veli Acu, board members of the Human Rights Agenda Association.

After an appeal by the prosecution two more activists, Nalan Erkem from the Citizens' Assembly and İlknur Üstün, the coordinator of the Women Coalition, were arrested.¹⁸⁷

They were charged with “supporting an armed terrorist organization.”¹⁸⁸ President Erdoğan, who attended the G20 Summit in Germany on July 8, 2017, answered journalists' questions and said that “this meeting was a continuation of July 15 [coup attempt].”¹⁸⁹

while photographing the Lice demonstrations in Taksim. On July 1 she was released and deported as well as being banned from entering Turkey for a year.¹⁸⁵

Sweden is one of the countries that have been affected by Turkey's crackdown on human rights activists. Ten human rights activists, including Swedish citizen Ali Gharavi, gathered for a workshop on İstanbul's Büyükkada on July 5, 2017. However, Turkish police raided the workshop and detained the 10 activists. The İstanbul 10th High Criminal Court arrested six

185] “İsveçli gazeteci sınırışı edildi”, ilkehaber.com, 2 Temmuz 2017, <http://www.ilkehaber.com/haber/isvecli-gazeteci-sinirdisi-edildi-26658.htm> ; “Journalisten Sarah: ”Allting slutade väldigt bra”, Aftonbladet, 1 July 2017, <http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/article17056073.ab>

186] “Büyükkada’da gözaltına alınan 10 aktivistten 6’sı tutuklandı”, BBC Türkçe, 18 Temmuz 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-40639755>

187] “Büyükkada’da gözaltına alınıp serbest bırakılan iki insan hakları aktivisti tutuklandı”, Birgün, 23 Temmuz 2017, <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/buyukada-da-gozaltina-alinip-serbest-birakilan-iki-insan-haklari-aktivisti-tutuklandi-171156.html>

188] “Büyükkada’da gözaltına alınan 10 aktivistten 6’sı tutuklandı”, BBC Türkçe, 18 Temmuz 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-40639755>

189] “O toplantı 15 Temmuz’un devamı içindi”, Sabah, 8 Temmuz 2017, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2017/07/09/o-toplanti-15-temmuzun-devami-icindi>

Amnesty International denied the accusation of a “secret meeting,”¹⁹⁰ and the Swedish government reacted to the arrests. The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced their concerns over the developments.¹⁹¹ Minister of Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström said the Swedish government found the arrest “very concerning” and added: “The developments in Turkey regarding human rights and the rule of law are followed with great concern by our government. These arrests are a continuation of longstanding practices against the representatives of organizations working for human rights. A free press and free opposition are preconditions for a pluralistic, democratic and healthy society.”¹⁹²

Wallström summoned Turkish Ambassador Kaya Türkmen to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs over journalist Hamza Yalçın’s arrest in Spain and Ali Gharavi’s in İstanbul.¹⁹³ Wallström said in a statement on Facebook, “The Turkish ambassador was once again called to the foreign ministry, and we expressed our concern and desires about the Swedish citizens who were in custody.” Wallström said they informed Ankara that these incidents might affect Turkey’s relations with the European Union and Sweden. Wallström commented on Yalçın’s arrest and explained that Interpol cannot be used for political purposes. She also added that Gharavi, who had participated in a peaceful seminar in İstanbul, should be released.

Meanwhile, Germany and Sweden gave Turkey a note of protest over the arrest of their human rights activist citizens.¹⁹⁴ On October 25, 2017 a Turkish court ordered the release of eight human rights activists including Idil Eser, the director of Amnesty International Turkey, as well as Peter Steudtner and Ali Gharavi.¹⁹⁵

13. Swedish Company Fired 306 People

The State of Emergency (OHAL) and decree-laws that were issued by the government without consulting Parliament have become the new norm in the governance of Turkey. As a result, tens of thousands of people were arrested and

190] “Af Örgütü: Büyükada’da ‘gizli toplantı’ yapıldığı iddiaları asılsızdır”, BBC Türkçe, 9 Temmuz 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-40547649>

191] “İsveç’ten tutuklu aktivistle ilgili açıklama: Endişeliyiz”, Deutsche Welle Türkçe, 18 Temmuz 2017, <http://www.dw.com/tr/isveçten-tutuklu-aktivistle-ilgili-aciklama-endişeliyiz/a-39737331>

192] “İsveç’ten insan hakları savunucularının tutuklanmasına tepki”, Cumhuriyet, 19 Temmuz 2017, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/dunya/785104/isvec_ten_insan_haklari_savunucularinin_tutuklanmasına_tepki.html

193] “Türk büyükelçi İsveç Dışişleri Bakanlığı’na çağrıldı”, Sputnik Türkçe, 25 Ağustos 2017, <https://tr.sputniknews.com/avrupa/201708251029876780-turk-buyukelci-isvec-disisleri/>

194] “Germany ve İsveç’ten Türkiye’ye nota: Tahammül edilmesi neredeyse imkansız”, [diken.com.tr](http://www.diken.com.tr/Germany-ve-isveçten-turkiyeye-nota-tahammul-edilmesi-neredeyse-imkansiz/), 26 Temmuz 2017, <http://www.diken.com.tr/Germany-ve-isveçten-turkiyeye-nota-tahammul-edilmesi-neredeyse-imkansiz/>

195] “Turkish court releases eight rights activists on bail in terrorism trial”, 25 October 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-rights/turkish-court-releases-eight-rights-activists-on-bail-in-terrorism-trial-idUSKBN1CU0BM>

more than 150,000 were dismissed from government jobs on charges of alleged terrorism and coup plotting. The ludicrous charges are backed by what the government claims is evidence of terrorism such as membership in a critical union; subscription to a critical newspaper; having an account in Bank Asya, which operated as a duly authorized bank within Turkey's banking system; downloading the ByLock messaging application to smart phones; cancelling membership in the Digitürk cable TV platform; possessing books written by Fethullah Gülen; sending children to schools linked to the movement; working at these schools; working at NGOs linked to the movement; and giving financial support to the families of imprisoned people.

Many private companies followed suit for fear of government wrath and fired people who were believed to be linked to the movement. The aspect that concerns Sweden is a union called Pak Savunma-İş Sendikası. It was one of the dozens of unions that were shut down by decree-law No 667 on July 22, 2016.¹⁹⁶ Afterwards, thousands of workers who were members of this union began to be fired. Swedish-based security company Securitas fired 306 of its workers who were members of the union at the request of the Antalya Governor's Office on October 19, 2016.¹⁹⁷ Securitas Turkey confirmed this information.¹⁹⁸ A press release that was issued by Securitas Security Services on October 19, 2016 read as follows:

“As is known, the PAK Savunma-İş union was shut down because of its links to FETÖ/PYD¹⁹⁹ based on decree-law 667 effective July 22, 2016, which states in its Article 4(1) titled ‘Measures against Public Servants’ that ‘Those who are considered to be a member of, or have relation, connection or contact with terrorist organizations or structure/entities, organizations or groups, established by the National Security Council as engaging in activities against the national security of the State shall be dismissed from public service’; and Article 4(3) which states ‘These persons shall not be a founder, co-founder or personnel of private security companies.’

Today, (October 19, 2016) the Antalya Governor's Office Provincial Directorate of Security sent a note to public institutions and private security companies including Securitas Security Services, attaching a list of people who were members or workers of the PAK Savunma-İş union, which was shut down under the referenced decree. It stated that the governor's office had cancelled the licenses of these people to work in security. As Securitas Security Services we informed our workers on this list and

196] “İşte kapatılan sendikalar”, Sözcü, 23 Temmuz 2016, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/gundem/iste-kapatilan-sendikalar-1326949/>

197] “Havalimanında 306 güvenlik görevlisi işten çıkarıldı”, Cumhuriyet, 20 Ekim 2016, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/618435/Havalimaninda_306_guvenlik_gorevlisi_isten_cikarildi.html

198] Securitas'ın basın açıklaması, 19 Ekim 2016, <http://www.securitas.com.tr/surdurulebilirlik/medya/haberler/kamuoyu-aciklamas2/>

199] FETÖ/PYD refers to the Gülen movement. It was coined by Erdogan to defame the group in what Turkish government describes as Fethullahist Terror Organization/Parallel State Structure.

started proceedings to terminate their relationship with our company.

“We respectfully announce to the public that people who are identified by the state authorities as linked to terrorist organizations, which threaten the indivisible unity of our country, cannot be associated with our company. As the Securitas family, we will do our job every day with our 11,000 workers in more than 2,500 locations in 77 Turkish cities to provide safety and security.”

14. Response of the Turkish Embassy and Turkish Religious Foundation

SCF asked for comments from the Turkish Embassy and Diyanet in Sweden, but both declined to respond.

CONCLUSION

Sweden is one of the few countries that stand out from the rest in Europe in welcoming a large number of refugees and has certainly gained valuable experience in integrating new arrivals. It was presented by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe as a country whose experiences can be shared with others.²⁰⁰ It has always been a destination for dissidents, opponents and critics from Turkey who included not only Turks but also leftist groups, Kurds, Syriacs, Assyrians and others. Members of the Gülen movement joined these groups following the crackdown and persecution that were launched in 2013 targeting the movement.

No doubt the political differences at home are present in diaspora communities, including the one in Sweden. Yet the level and the intensity of divisions have never been so prevalent in the Turkish community in Sweden simply because past Turkish governments had always navigated carefully so as to avoid disturbing ties with Sweden and any other country in Europe. This balancing act was visibly disrupted with Erdoğan mobilizing all the resources of the state to pursue his witch-hunt abroad, transforming Turkish embassies and other pro-government groups into political tools. When embassies and other Turkish government agencies overseas started doing the dirty bidding of their political masters in Ankara, not necessarily beneficial to Turkish national security interests, bilateral ties with Sweden and many other European countries were dealt a tremendous blow.

Asylum seekers in Sweden who are Gülen sympathizers, whose numbers have reached almost a thousand including family members, have borne the brunt of the terrifying profiling, harassment and threats by the Erdoğan regime and its proxies. Erdoğan's open threat of "No country or region around the world will ever be a safe haven" for movement followers has come to fruition with abductions and illegal renditions in a few countries with problematic democratic track records such as Malaysia and Pakistan. But Sweden has resisted such pressures and offered protection to vulnerable political refugees who were able to escape the wrath of the government in Ankara.

The Swedish government, known for a multilateral approach with a focus on broad international collaboration and cooperation, has not taken a confrontational position towards Turkey but rather tried to engage at various levels to nudge this country of 80 million in the right direction. The engagement with Turkey has not really worked out well, and the rule of law, fundamental rights and freedoms, and democracy in Turkey have gone from bad to worse. At times Sweden did not hesitate to take a strong position on specific issues such as freedom of the press, women and children's rights and political rights. It has pushed several initiatives at the Council of Europe

200] "Integration of refugees in times of critical pressure: learning from recent experience and examples of best practice", PACE, 28 June 2017, <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=23966&lang=en>

and European Union level to send a message to Turkey, such as on the abuse of the Interpol system to hunt down legitimate critics and a major crackdown on journalists and human rights defenders.

At home, the Swedish security services appear to have taken seriously the threats to critics of the Erdoğan government, especially the alarming level of harassment targeting members of the Gülen movement, and launched a series of investigations that are still pending. Although hard evidence that implicates and incriminates the Turkish Embassy directly proved difficult to come by, there has nevertheless been a growing body of indications that go beyond circumstantial evidence suggesting that the campaign of harassment, profiling and threats were pursued with the approval and support of the Turkish government and its proxy groups such as Svenska Islam Stiftelsen (Sweden Diyanet Foundation) and the UETD. Former Turkish Ambassador Kaya Türkmen even confirmed these profiling activities.

Swedish media have covered many of these revelations and documented cases of threat, abuse, profiling and harassment of Gülen movement members and other critics as part of Erdoğan's long arm in this Nordic nation.

Despite ongoing investigations into these allegations of nefarious activities and extensive coverage in the Swedish media, the Turkish government does not appear to have ceased and desisted from its efforts to destabilize the Turkish diaspora, hamper integration efforts and deepen fissures within the expatriate community. Rather, espionage activities by Turkish intelligence in a country that is supposed to be a friend and ally have increased under various schemes. Some of the clandestine efforts were coordinated by Erdoğan's close confidante, Metin Külünk, who often visited Sweden and provided support to political proxy groups that aim to penetrate not only the Turkish and Kurdish diaspora but also Muslim groups from Central Asia, Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

There have been real consequences of this campaign conducted by the Erdoğan regime. Gülen sympathizers who are threatened, profiled and reported to Turkish authorities cannot return to Turkey, not even for a vacation, a funeral or a business trip. A Turkish Swede was interrogated at a police station where he learned that he had been reported along with 15 of his friends by an Erdoğanist in Sweden. A hate campaign was launched against Turkish-Swedish schools by AKP supporters who called on the Turkish diaspora not to send their children to these schools. An asylum seeker was kicked out of a Turkish mosque by the chairman of the mosque association when he went for prayers. A female asylum seeker had to move house because of the verbal assault of AKP supporters in the laundry room. An asylum seeker's house in Malmö was attacked by gunfire. Eggs were thrown at an education center in Göteborg. A social media campaign told people not to rent their houses to members of the movement.

Judging by how the harassment campaign in Sweden has played to the AKP constituency in Turkey to fuel nationalist euphoria and religious zealotry, the campaign targeting critics in Sweden does not appear to be going away any time soon. The current AKP government in Turkey surely wants the allegiance of Turks in Sweden and in particular to garner their votes during national and presidential elections. More important than that, the Erdoğan government wants to use them as proxies for two main purposes: One is to increase Ankara's bargaining power in arm-twisting negotiations with Sweden on various initiatives at the bilateral and multilateral level, and the other is to mobilize the diaspora for political and other purposes including projecting Turkey's might to Erdoğan's constituency back at home.

The traditional non-confrontational approach of the Swedish government may not be enough to deter Erdoğan's encroachment as Turkey does not behave as a rational actor under his leadership. Playing hardball as the US, German and Dutch governments have done may be the only option left for Sweden to weather this storm coming its way. It remains to be seen how the Swedish government will be able to handle this looming threat as the Erdoğan government is bent on keeping up the campaign of threats to expatriates living in Sweden.

It appears the Swedish government has toughened up its approach slightly in its 2018 foreign policy statement, which was delivered by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström on February 14, 2018. The statement said: "Developments in Turkey, including recurrent conflicts with Kurdish groups, are deeply worrying, as are the attacks in Afrin in northern Syria."²⁰¹ The government maintained the basic parameters, however, saying that "the EU must work with, but also put pressure on, Turkey. The EU should not close the door to membership." Some opposition parties found this approach unsatisfying during the debate on foreign policy and criticized the government. For example, Yasmine Posio Nilsson, a Swedish lawmaker from the Left Party, said Sweden should suspend development aid and review trade policies with respect to Turkey.

201] Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs by Margot Wallström, Swedish Parliament, 14 February 2018, <http://www.government.se/49170e/contentassets/da51ffff1e3848b4bc5597190bdd8c4e/Statement-of-Foreign-Policy-2018>



ERDOĞAN'S LONG ARM:

THE CASE OF SWEDEN

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