

**Written Evidence to
Foreign Affairs Committee
on**

UK's relations with Turkey

**Alliance for Shared Values
& Dialogue Platform
20 Oct 2016**

CONTENTS

		para	page
	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY		3
I.	INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHY	1	4
II.	FETHULLAH GÜLEN	3	4
III.	HIZMET MOVEMENT	6	5
IV.	HIZMET IN UK AND TRANSPARENCY	9	6
V.	PERSECUTION OF HIZMET	12	7
	A. Human Rights Violations against Hizmet between 2013 and 2015	12	7
	B. Human Rights Violations against Hizmet since the failed coup	16	8
	C. Public dimension of persecution	26	9
	D. Stages of persecution	32	11
VI.	WHY IS HIZMET SINGLED OUT?	33	15
VII.	GOVERNMENT NARRATIVES AND ALLEGATIONS	37	15
	A. Allegation 1: "Hizmet is secretive"	40	16
	B. Allegation 2: "Infiltrating the state"	48	18
	C. Allegation 3: "Parallel State"	52	19
	D. Allegation 4: "FETO and Coup"	59	20
VIII.	RECOMMENDATIONS TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE	1	27
IX.	RECOMMENDED SOURCES	1	28

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Hizmet ('Service') is a decentralised civil society movement which originated in Turkey but is now transnational. Its lead scholar, Fethullah Gülen, teaches a peaceful, spiritual and dialogic form of Islam, recognises democracy as the best form of governance, favours an Anglo-Saxon style of secularism, and advocates for Turkey's accession to the EU. He opposes identity politics and argues that Islam does not dictate a particular form of governance and there is no responsibility on Muslims to found an "Islamic state." He suggests that Muslims should strive for a vibrant civil society. He has consistently and strongly denounced any form or type of terrorism.
- Until recently outsiders perceived the movement as an ally of Turkey's AK Party. However, with Erdoğan's growing authoritarianism and since the Gezi Park Protests, the President and the AK Party have singled out Hizmet as a convenient political scapegoat and have taken continuous, accelerating, and frequently unlawful steps to dismember the movement and to eradicate it from Turkey and the rest of the world. Despite the fact that Turkey's AK Party explains almost every detrimental development in Turkey today by reference to Gülen, it is important to note that this Committee's 2010 – 2012 report on Turkey featured only one passing reference to Gülen. If the accusations about Gülen were true, then surely this would have been picked up and raised by at least some of the experts and witnesses that submitted written and oral evidence to the Committee for the 2010 – 2012 report.
- Even when targeting Hizmet, Erdoğan uses specific allegations for specific purposes. For example, claiming that Hizmet has established a "parallel state" within the state allows the government to purge the state of non-loyalists en masse. Excommunicating Gülen and Hizmet from Islam serves to sever Hizmet's public support. Claiming that Hizmet is CIA-, MOSSAD-, MI6-funded and coordinated is intended to turn ordinary Muslims against Hizmet. Claiming that Hizmet is in fact a "terrorist organisation" enables the government to proscribe the movement, terrorise its grass roots, and confiscate all of its property and assets. Pinning the coup on Hizmet enabled the AKP government to justify its persecution of Hizmet and its pre-designation of it as an "armed terrorist organisation." Claiming that Hizmet is secretive helps support the other allegations but also works best outside of Turkey where the more bombastic accusations are approached with scepticism.
- The spurious accusation against Gülen and the Hizmet movement is being used to justify a huge number of real and even deadly human rights violations against Hizmet participants inside and outside Turkey. These human rights violations are not confined to Hizmet, however, but encompass all opposition to or even critics of Erdoğan or the current government, especially journalists and members of Turkey's Kurdish minority. Erdoğan's threats to "eradicate" and "exterminate" Hizmet even beyond Turkey's borders are an incitement to violence within the UK and this, as well as human rights violations within Turkey must be seen to have an impact on UK foreign policy.
- Given the nature of the personal invitation to submit to the Committee, this written statement addresses the above-mentioned allegations as well as the nature of Hizmet, Hizmet in the UK, the persecution of Hizmet before and after the coup, why Hizmet is being singled out by the AKP government and some recommendations.

I. INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHY

1. We were personally invited to submit written evidence by the Committee to explain Hizmet and provide a Hizmet perspective and response to the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government's allegations against Fethullah Gülen and the Hizmet movement (Hizmet), including but not restricted to, the failed coup. The submission's length and content, both checked in advance with the Committee Specialist, is a reflection of the variety and gravity of allegations made by the AKP government against Gülen and Hizmet. References to "Hizmet's position or response" is a shorthand for "what we surmise Hizmet's position or response" to be.
2. Hizmet is a social movement with participants from a wide range of backgrounds. It is therefore difficult to claim to speak on behalf of Hizmet as a whole. That noted, the New York-based [Alliance for Shared Values](#) (AfSV) and the Brussels-based [Dialogue Platform](#) have seen and agreed to the contents of this written evidence. AfSV is a platform representing numerous Hizmet-inspired organisations in the U.S. Dialogue Platform brings together a number of dialogue organisations in Western Europe. It also features Gülen as its honorary chairperson.

II. FETHULLAH GÜLEN

3. Muhammed Fethullah Gülen (b. 1941) is an Islamic scholar, preacher and peace advocate. He is a mainstream scholar, in the Sunni/Hanafi school of thought. Gülen has authored over 60 books, some of which were mandatory reading for Al Azhar university modules. Gülen offers a sufi-orientated, scripturally-anchored re-reading of religion in light of traditional Islamic epistemology and contemporary culture and times. He is one of the most intensely studied living Islamic scholars.
4. Gülen teaches a civil, socially-active, peaceful, spiritual and dialogic form of Islam. In 1994 he said that "democracy is not perfect but it is the best form of governance we have. There can be no return from democracy." He has been in favour of an Anglo-Saxon style of secularism and strongly opposes the instrumentalisation of religion in politics (often referred to as "Islamism"). Since the 1980s Gülen has spoken in favour of Turkey's accession to the EU and has opposed identity politics. He has strongly opposed the notion of an "Islamic state", arguing that Islam does not dictate a particular form of governance and that there is no responsibility on Muslims to found an "Islamic state". Instead, he has argued that for Islam to survive, it requires a vibrant civil society and that is what Muslims should strive for. He has consistently denounced any form or type of terrorism, whatever the circumstance or professed justification, including suicide attacks, and provides scriptural justifications for his refutations. His Islamic counsel and teachings are considered to be an [antidote to violent extremist ideology](#) claiming an Islamic justification. He has made the theological case for valuing diversity of not just race and culture but of religion and faith too. He provides an ontologically grounded religious argument for an connecting free will with human rights law and full citizenship regardless of religion or race. Therefore, Gülen's genius has been to offer a religiously anchored religious-secularity, allowing people to be thoroughly religious while at the same time believing in the necessity of dialogue, democracy and the non-instrumentalisation of religion in politics.
5. Gülen's teachings are action-based and developed, modified and and refined over time. Although a scholar himself, his focus has been practice. So, for example, he has not just spoken about dialogue but personally engaged in it, even when it was very uncommon and dangerous to do so. Despite being denounced by the Islamists of the time, Gülen personally and publicly met with Pope John Paul II, the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Israel as well as Turkey's religious and ethnic leaders such as the Patriarch of the Turkish-Armenian community, the Chief Rabbi of the Turkish Jewish community and leaders of the Turkish Alevi community. At the time, and even today, some of these communities

were viewed with deep suspicion in Turkey.¹ Gülen's efforts helped to socially legitimise these communities in Turkey. Gülen was involved in setting up the Journalists and Writers Foundation in 1994, whose first workshops were on "Islam and democracy", "Islam and secularism", and "Islam and the West." In the 1970s and 80s, he began advocating for education saying, "we have enough mosques, we need schools". The schools that he had in mind were non-denominational, which were later founded by the movement.

III. HIZMET MOVEMENT

6. Hizmet literally means "service" in Turkish. The Hizmet movement, also known as the Gülen movement, is an Islamically inspired social movement. It began as a religious congregation in 1960s' and 70s' Turkey. By the 1990s it had evolved into a nationwide education community. By the 2000s it had become a transnational social movement with over two thousand nondenominational schools, dialogue organisations, relief charities and media outlets in over 160 countries worldwide. It is faith-inspired in its motivation yet faith-neutral or inclusive in its manifestation, demonstrating the type of religio-secularity mentioned above. As this approach is unusual for an Islamically-inspired social movement, some onlookers suspect the movement of hiding its true colours. However, despite rigorous investigation by independent and critical scholars over an extensive period of time, there is no research that claims the movement's schools, for example, proselytise to non-Muslims.² [David Tittensor's 2015](#) Oxford University Press published monograph, is only the most recent testament to this. Since December 2013 it has been the subject of one of the most brutal, relentless and comprehensive clampdowns on a social entity in modern Turkish history.
7. As a social movement, Hizmet does not have a corporation-style centrally organised, top down, hierarchical structure that encapsulates the entire movement. Rather, it relies on informal networks, moral authority and organic leadership to mobilise the grassroots to support Hizmet's formal activities. In Hizmet, these correlate to practices such as *sohbet* (religious conversations), *istishare* (consultative meeting), *mütevelli* (board of trustees), *abi and abla* (brother and sister), *gönülü* (participant/volunteer), and *himmət* (giving/donation). The Centre for Hizmet Studies has had three folders on its website since 2013 titled "[Hizmet and Structure](#)", "[Hizmet Terms](#)" and "[Hizmet Inspiration](#)" where it defines all of these terms and their functions.³ Hizmet also cooperates with scholars wishing to research the movement from within. [Helen Ebaugh's](#) 2009 book,⁴ which discusses the inner workings of Hizmet, was published as a result of Hizmet's cooperation to support the research. The two most recent books published on the movement ([Joshua D. Hendrick](#) and [David Tittensor](#)) were the outcome of extensive ethnographic fieldwork of 13 and 14 months, respectively, which could not have been undertaken in the way they were without the movement's willingness to host and cooperate with these studies, as the author's themselves acknowledge.
8. According to Gülen, "[t]he purpose of religion is to bring about a peace that is founded on universal human rights, the rule of law and universal human values."⁵ Gülen states that peace can only be achieved through an enlightenment that facilitates the dialogue between science and spirituality, secularism and religion, tradition and modernity and East and West. To achieve this, Hizmet aims to offer a rereading of religious text in light

¹ In 2012, Hizmet and Alevi Federation worked together to open five "Cemevi and Mosque, side by side". The first was opened with four more to follow. The idea was to have a cemevi and mosque on the same site with common courtyard, meeting halls and public tea houses and to facilitate dialogue and greater understanding between Turkey's Sunni and Alevi communities. The AKP government shut down the site and project.

² This does not mean that Hizmet does not engage in activities aimed towards teaching Islam. It does, but these are geared towards Muslims, not non-Muslims and are secondary to its main focus which is to reach the widest possible common denominator. This is not a strategic ploy, it is grounded in Gülen's understanding of religion.

³ These were collated from blogs written by Hizmet participants dating back to 2010.

⁴ Helen Ebaugh, *The Gülen Movement: A Sociological Analysis of a Civic Movement Rooted in Moderate Islam* (Springer, 2009).

⁵ "Fethullah Gülen on the Peshmerge, Turkmen and Iraqi Defense of Kobani," *Centre for Hizmet Studies*, accessed June 21, 2016, http://www.hizmetstudies.org/115-13-_17,fethullah-gülen-on-the-peshmerge-turkmen-and-iraqi-defense-of-kobani.html.

of contemporary times articulating a constructive position of religious responsibility, democracy, multiculturalism, and globalisation in the context of secular modernity. It offers a practice that invests in education, dialogue, relief work and social enterprise to bring about upward social mobility, cognitive liberation, cross-fertilisation of ideas and cultures and social engagement. For its religious participants, striving to open nondenominational inclusive schools becomes a form of religious activism in addition to all else. For its non-religious participants, investing in education is admirable in and of itself. By interpreting the purpose of religion to be peace, Hizmet offers a religious practice and mindset that is both religious and secular at the same time. In doing so, it is able to bring together people of diverse backgrounds.

IV. HIZMET IN UK AND TRANSPARENCY

9. Hizmet has been active in the UK since 1993. Participants have set up charities focusing primarily on supplementary education, interfaith and intercultural dialogue and social religious projects, including Axis Educational Trust, Anatolian Muslims Society, the [Dialogue Society](#), Mevlana Rumi Mosque, Fellowship Educational Society, Spring Educational Society, and Lighthouse Education Society. There is one independent mainstream school associated with the movement.⁶ Hizmet activities are concentrated in and around London, where there is the largest Turkish-speaking base. To coordinate and to achieve greater transparency, Hizmet-inspired organisations founded [VOICES in Britain](#) in 2013.⁷ As its website states, “VOICES is a consortium network comprising voluntary organisations founded by Hizmet-inspired people to inspire, connect and empower society in Britain.” The VOICES website has listed its member organisations since the consortium was founded.
10. In 2015, VOICES sent letters to stakeholders including the Prime Minister’s office, Home Office, Department for Communities and Local Government and Foreign Office to inform them of VOICES, its aims and member organisations. The letter also stated (with prior permission) the names of Hizmet-inspired organisations in the UK that had not yet joined VOICES, and listed significant Hizmet developments in the UK. In early 2016, VOICES launched its new website, which included details of its member organisations and their directors as well as the names and roles of Hizmet participants who did not have formal positions within Hizmet organisations but were nonetheless influential within the Hizmet community in the UK. However, VOICES was forced to revert to its old webpages when it became clear that AKP supporters were targeting Hizmet participants and organisations in the UK. VOICES is more than happy to provide the list of individuals that were named on that website to the Committee in confidence and answer any further questions on Hizmet in the UK.
11. Hizmet participants and organisations have also encouraged and cooperated with postgraduate students, scholars and journalists researching the Hizmet movement in the UK. Publications, papers and radio documentaries have been produced as a result.⁸ Hizmet has also sought to develop local links and partnerships, focusing its energies on local issues and matters of concern. Its flagship organisation, the Dialogue Society for example, has focused its energies on developing and delivering new ideas for bringing communities together. It publishes a peer-reviewed academic journal on Dialogue Studies, co-delivers a Master’s degree in Dialogue Studies with Keele University and published 10 community dialogue manuals (650 pages) with DCLG funding.

⁶ Although the school acknowledges its Hizmet-inspiration on its website, it asks that its name is not included in context of such discussions, given that Hizmet-related people and organisations are being targeted in the UK by AKP supporters (please see [HizmetWatch.com](#)). The school is happy for me to inform the Committee of the school name and details in a separate communication.

⁷ The name, part acronym, stands for “Voluntary Organisations to Inspire, Connect and Empower Society in Britain.”

⁸ See for example, Paul Weller, “The Gülen Movement in the United Kingdom” in *Gülen in Europe: The Western Journey of a Turkish Muslim Movement* (P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2015), p 239 – 252.

V. PERSECUTION OF HIZMET

A. Human Rights Violations against Hizmet between 2013 and 2015

12. The solicitors of the Journalists and Writers' Foundation commissioned an independent, self-governing group of authors to conduct an independent inquiry into the actions of the Turkish government, its institutions and officials, against supporters of the Hizmet movement. The ninety-five page report titled "A Report on the Rule of Law and Respect for Human Rights in Turkey since December 2013", was published on July 2015.⁹ The authors of this inquiry and report are the former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales the Rt Hon The Lord Woolf CH, University College London Emeritus Professor of Public Law and the Director of the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law Sir Jeffrey Jowell KCMG QC, former Solicitor-General for England and Wales the Rt Hon Sir Edward Garnier QC MP, and human rights and media law barrister Sarah Palin.
13. The report concludes that, between December 2013 and July 2015, the Turkish government perpetrated systematic human rights violations that would justify legal action at international level, most likely before the European Court of Human Rights. It states that the principal target of these abuses has been supporters of Hizmet. Commenting on the findings of the report, the authors said: "We have analysed the actions taken by the Turkish government and its agents since December 2013 and have unanimously concluded that there has been a distinct reversal in the reform process that had been taking place since Turkey began accession talks with the European Union in 2005. We regard this as a serious setback for Turkish democracy and its respect for human rights, in particular for the freedom of speech and the rule of law."
14. The report identifies three main ways in which the government's subsequent actions against supporters of Hizmet have violated the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), as well as other human rights treaties to which the Turkish Republic is party. These are:
 - a. The subversion of the rule of law and subsequent denial of the rights to liberty, security, and a fair trial: By undermining the independence of the Turkish judiciary, the AKP government detained outspoken media figures and hundreds of police officers involved in the anticorruption operation. These arrests took place in contravention of the Turkish Constitution and the prohibition of torture, the right to liberty and security, and the right to a fair trial enshrined in Articles 3, 5, and 6 of the ECHR respectively. Examples of the human rights violations associated with these detentions include: unbearable conditions, denial of access to lawyers, forced signature of documents, and failure to be brought promptly before a judge suffered by the arrested police officers.
 - b. The denial of the right to freedom of expression: Since December 2013, the government has increasingly infringed the right to freedom of expression enshrined in Article 10 of the ECHR. This state-sponsored suppression of free reporting and public debate has entailed both restrictions on freedom of the press and interference with social media. Examples of the AKP government's crackdown include the takeover and eventual closure of *Zaman*, Turkey's largest selling newspaper, as well as the takeover and closure of all Hizmet-affiliated media outlets in Turkey including 13 TV and radio stations. The government has also taken over and shut media outlets belonging to Hizmet-friendly businesspeople, such as the media outlets belonging to Ipek Medya (including 2 newspapers and 2 TV stations) and jailing, prosecuting and deporting many journalists during this period with affiliations to Hizmet-friendly media outlets.

⁹ For the full report or its executive summary, visit One Brick Court Chambers [website](#).

- c. Discrimination against Hizmet: The AKP government has purged [some 60,000](#) police officers, civil servants, judges, and prosecutors removed from their posts between December 2013 and July 2015 on the pretext of belonging to an alleged “parallel state”. Such discriminatory measures contravene the right to a private life and the prohibition of discrimination guaranteed by Articles 8 and 14 of the ECHR. The AKP government has also sought to vilify supporters of the Gülen movement through a campaign of hate speech (see para 27). The widespread and systematic nature of its aggressive rhetoric suggests that it constitutes hate speech, as defined within and proscribed under the ambit of Article 17 of the ECHR. The AKP government has interfered in an apparently unjustified, disproportionate, and illegal manner in Hizmet-affiliated companies and associations’ right to property, as guaranteed by Article 1 of Protocol 1 of the ECHR. Examples include the seizure of Bank Asya and the rescission of international relief organisation Kimse Yok Mu’s right to collect charitable donations.
15. The authors added: “From the perspective of international human rights law, we consider that the Turkish government has perpetrated significant human rights violations against supporters of the Gülen movement that would justify legal action before the European Court of Human Rights, in the absence of suitable remedies in Turkey.” Ironically, this report was used by the pro-government media as means of further vilifying Hizmet for “smearing Turkey overseas.”

B. Human Rights Violations against Hizmet since the failed coup

16. Prohibition against torture and inhuman or degrading treatment: Amnesty international has reported [credible evidence of torture, beatings](#) and in some instances, rape, committed in the presence of detainees. There is footage showing detainees being abused both verbally and physically. A number of detainees have died while in custody, including a teacher, businessman and prosecutor. Turkish authorities claim that these detainees committed suicide. The more likely explanation is that their death was caused by a combination of torture and inhumane treatment. Other reports show inhumane treatment in the form of detainees being held in cramped quarters, being denied basic medical needs and access to hygiene amenities. These detainees are tortured on the pretext of being Hizmet supporters.
17. Right to liberty and security and due process: Tens of thousands of people have been unlawfully rounded up without cause for alleged association with the Hizmet movement. There is no court order designating Hizmet as a terrorist organisation and therefore real or perceived association with Hizmet cannot be a cause of any action whatsoever, far less the cause of detention. Through mass detention without cause, the right to liberty of detainees is being violated. Furthermore, their right to legal representation is being denied. Legal representatives that come forward are themselves being detained, harassed, their offices searched and in some cases assaulted by the police. Relatives of detainees are harassed, vilified and threatened and denied information about their next of kin in custody.
18. Right to rule of law and fair trial: Judges that rule against a prosecutor’s request in cases concerning Hizmet-related individuals are suspended, investigated, and dismissed, facing the same type of unlawful treatment they have attempted to rule against. See para 70-1 for examples from the past two years.
19. Right to family life: This is being violated by the Turkish authorities which detain family members of a “person of interest” in lieu of that person. Turkish police have detained the partners, parents and siblings of such people. For example, the Turkish police detained Mrs Koru, a housewife, in lieu of her husband, journalist Mr Koru. When detaining Mrs Koru, her eldest son was told, “You’re next if your dad does not surrender.” While the children of such families can be threatened by the Turkish authorities, the detained parents are also threatened with their children being placed in care. This is often done to extract information and “confessions” from detainees under interrogation.

20. Right to travel: The Turkish authorities imposed a blanket travel ban on all state employees in Turkey; that is a staggering number of people. To travel these people have to obtain permission. Moreover, the government has cancelled the Turkish passports of all those detained, whether charged or not, and those of the detainees' family members. Turkish authorities have stated that they have revoked 50,000 passports. The actual number of cancelled passports is likely to be more.
21. Right to lawful employment: State employees who are suspended or dismissed are banned from re-applying to any other public position without due process of any kind. Furthermore, Turkey's official gazette is publishing the names of state employees who have been dismissed to effectively ban their private employment as well. Private companies that offer employment to these people are being monitored and threatened. Vocational qualifications and licenses of teachers (approximately 20,000), doctors and academics are being cancelled. School diplomas of professionals are being invalidated, rendering these people unemployable in their professions. A teacher dismissed without due process [has written to the press saying](#) that the government pressure is such that he can't even find work as a porter.
22. Right to property: Turkish authorities are imposing a total freeze on all assets, banks accounts and properties of those under investigation, including those that have not been charged. Coupled with a ban on travel and re-employment, and with social ostracisation, this creates immense financial hardship that threatens even basic survival.
23. Hate crime, discrimination and vilification: The hate speech and discrimination has been super-amplified against Gülen and Hizmet so that ordinary citizens are burning books authored by Gülen, Maths and Science teaching books authored by people allegedly associated with Hizmet, postdoctoral theses on Gülen or Hizmet are being removed from the centralised thesis archive, number plates that happen to have "FG" together are being revoked and Gülen and Hizmet are being retrospectively blamed for the unresolved political assassinations over the past two decades. Being unsure of the government's narrative on Gülen and Hizmet is now grounds for being targeted.
24. Right to respect for the home: State employees under investigation in state provided rented accommodation are being arbitrarily evicted from their homes. Private governing boards of apartment blocks are being pressured to evict residents associated with Hizmet, whether these residents are freehold or leasehold owners of the apartment they occupy. Private landlords are being warned against renting accommodation to "terrorists" such as Hizmet sympathizers and teachers.
25. Right to protection of property: Turkish authorities have arbitrarily seized all nurseries, schools, universities, tutorial centres, media outlets, charities and foundations and all their properties and chattels that they claim to be associated with Hizmet. They have done this without a court order establishing the guilt of Hizmet or the organisation with alleged connection to Hizmet. Some of these schools have been converted into state-run religious schools (Imam Hatips) and have been reopened. All properties and assets of Hizmet teachers and participants and businesspeople are being seized. The total value of the land and properties seized from Hizmet-affiliated schools, universities, hospitals and charities is estimated to have reached [15 billion dollars](#); this does not include the seizure of property and businesses from private businesspeople.

C. Public dimension of persecution

26. Hizmet sympathizers have been systematically vilified, demonized and dehumanised through a relentless and comprehensive campaign of hate speech and character assassination. This has been achieved by the speeches of Erdoğan (as prime minister and president), ministers and members of the AKP government and the pro-government media coverage. By creating an atmosphere of fear and characterising Hizmet as traitors, the government has sought to justify its draconian measures in Turkey in general,

mobilise mass support, and persuade the Turkish people to take pre-emptive action against Hizmet sympathizers and organisations in defence of the state and government.

27. Erdoğan speech on Hizmet sympathizers before coup: Erdoğan decided to demonize and dehumanize Hizmet sympathizers even before the coup by using the following language [between 2013 and 2015](#) to describe them as “traitors”, “perverts”, “blood-sucking leeches”, “vampires”, “a tumour”, “worse than Shia” in “lies, slander and taqiyyah”, “insidious viruses and parasites”, “cave-dwellers”, “members of terrorist organisation”, “raving assassins”, “spies”, “members of spy rings”, “tools”, “pawns of international networks”, “assassins”, and that “only Hell will purify them”. On Gülen, in particular, Erdoğan has described him as “terrorist leader”, “false prophet”, “fake saint and bogus scholar”, “conjurer”, “spell binder”. Erdoğan has added an international dimension to his characterisation of Hizmet claiming that Hizmet is a “pawn of a coalition of foreign powers”, engaged in a “dirty coalition”, “servants” of “international masterminds” requiring him to target Hizmet to “break their hands”, “enter their dens”, “crush them”, and “split them into their molecules by boiling them”.
28. Public encouraged to take pre-emptive action: Before the coup, the public were told to disown friends and relatives who were Hizmet supporters and told to boycott Hizmet schools and charities. Following these calls, a Twitter account with almost 150,000 followers posted a list of institutions and businessmen who were said to be members of Hizmet. Not having boycotted Hizmet schools (by continuing to enrol children there) or maintaining a Bank Asya bank account after 2014 is considered to amount to self-incriminating proof of guilt by the Turkish authorities. Post-coup, people are told to disown those who are even undecided on Hizmet’s “guilt”. Public hotlines have been created and members of the public are being encouraged both in and outside Turkey to inform the authorities of their “Gülenist family members, relatives, friends and neighbours”. This practice is also on-going in the UK, [formally](#) and informally. State officials in and outside of Turkey are reportedly collecting names of Hizmet sympathizers and reporting these back to Turkey. Turkish citizens living abroad are asked to collect names and to pass this information to official and unofficial Turkey outposts in those countries. Reports are now circulating of people being expelled from their apartments by other residents in the same block and other forms of vigilantism.
29. Legal immunity for crimes committed against “Gülenists”: The AKP government has made it clear that there is a form of immunity for crimes committed against Hizmet supporters, especially where those crimes are committed by state officials. Often, this is achieved by the police being unresponsive to attacks against Hizmet participants and organisations. This was once more reiterated when Turkey’s [Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag](#) rejected the Amnesty claim that detainees (especially Gülen/Hizmet-related ones) were being tortured without conducting any investigation into the matter. [Mehmet Metiner, AKP MP](#) and Chair of Parliamentary Commission of the Prison Services said “We will not conduct any investigation into allegations of torture of FETO [detainees], nor will we visit them... I am not concerned with the kicks and punches they sustained while being apprehended... I would have done more... If I had a gun that night I would have shot them in the forehead.” Not only is there a form of immunity, the AKP government is actively encouraging the commission of crime by telling people to profile and inform on their family members, relatives and friends that happen to be “Gülenists”.
30. Religious responsibility to excommunicate “Gülenists”: Using the Religious Affairs Directorate to issue statements against Hizmet describing it as “deviant”, “worse than Isis”, “equivalent to the Medinan hypocrites as described in the Qur’an”, “Satan-like” coupled with Erdoğan’s declaration of Gülen being a “false prophet” is tantamount to religious excommunication (*takfeer-ism*). It is for this reason that some religious groups in Turkey have argued that the “wives and property” of Hizmet’s sympathizers are theirs to take as “spoils of war.”
31. Exporting Turkey’s Troubles Overseas: Dismantling Hizmet overseas appears to be the AKP government’s number one foreign policy objective. It has already risked its relations with a number of countries as a result of this, including the U.S., Kazakhstan, Nigeria,

Pakistan and others. Beyond inter-state relations, it aims to directly meddle with overseas Turkish *and* non-Turkish Muslim communities through official and unofficial organs and methods. Reactions from the German, Dutch, Austrian and French governments need to be seen in this light. There appears to be a concerted effort to target and terrorise law-abiding Hizmet-inspired people and organisations across the world and especially in Western Europe. Owing to these efforts, community relations are being poisoned in the UK. Please visit www.HizmetWatch.com to see how Hizmet sympathizers and organisations are being boycotted, torched and vandalised, vilified and “outed” and how Hizmet participants have been effectively banned from mosques across Europe, including in London. UK residents are being encouraged to profile and inform on their “Gülenist” family members and friends to Turkey’s intelligence services, with this being featured in a London-based Turkish [newspaper offering to help](#) should the hotlines be engaged. The AKP government’s vindictive approach is harming both its foreign relations and our community relations in ways that is not fully recognised yet. In doing so, the AKP government uses a dangerous mix of religious, nationalistic, ideological, conspiratorial and anti-Semitic rhetoric – the type of extremist speech Prevent aims to tackle.

D. Stages of persecution

32. While Hizmet supported the AKP government’s progressive policies and stood by it against the secular establishment’s interventionist attempts (not least the 2008 attempt to ban the AKP and 70 of its leading members) between 2002 and 2010, there is a subtext that is often overlooked. The AKP government’s persecution of Hizmet has been systematic and comprehensive. The major stages can be summarised as follows:

Stage 1: Profile and control

2004	AKP government issues National Security Council Memorandum to monitor and profile Hizmet in and outside of Turkey.
2005	AKP government attempts to create a new form of “ unarmed, nonviolent terrorism ” category. This is defeated by opposition led by Hizmet’s Zaman newspaper campaign.
2006	Gülen writes letter to Erdoğan noting growing rumours of profiling and side-lining of alleged Hizmet sympathizers.
2008	Continued rumours of profiling and side-lining of Hizmet sympathizers in state.
2010	Erdoğan and Gül demand that Gülen retracts his criticism to the Wall Street Journal over the Mavi Marmara flotilla attempt at breaking the Gaza blockade. Gülen refuses.
2010	Gülen criticises Erdoğan for using human rights as a negotiating chip in the Kurdish peace process.
2011	Erdoğan makes it known that he is unhappy with Hizmet’s growing presence in the US. He attempts to undermine Hizmet overseas by countering it with un/official alternatives.
2013	April, 18: Forced closure of AKTIF SEN trade union for teachers and educators with 36,000 members, founded by people close to Hizmet.

Step 2: Exaggerate

2008 +	Pro-government pundits and government officials begin attributing great scale and power to Gülen and Hizmet. Today, many critics look
--------	---

back on those statements as expressions of admiration by the AKP government for the movement, whereas doyen journalist Mehmet Ali Birand warned in 2010:¹⁰

Whether they are aware of it or not, a grave danger awaits the Gülen movement... Their power and influence is being so exaggerated that if no precautions are taken, this imagined power will one day destroy them... They struggled to survive between 1970 and 2000 but today they are attributed incredible power...The power they are attributed is enormously exaggerated. It does not reflect the truth but the winds of exaggeration are blowing... The movement will be used as a scapegoat being blamed for every negativity, every government failure, anything that they want to pass the buck on, will be shoved onto the movement. Whether it is rumours that the movement has taken control of the judiciary and Constitutional court to other tales...I'm sure this legend is pumped up by the movement's enemies... I'm sure that they themselves are aware of how dangerous this is and that they are trying to rectify this by explaining themselves, but they are failing... This country and society is such that... it will start hunting down those it once enthusiastically applauded.

2011 Positive descriptions of Hizmet's influence increasingly replaced with a negative portrayal.

Step 3: Blame before corruption investigations of Dec 2013

2010 Pro-government media, pundits and sources begin to blame Gülen and Hizmet for a range things. These include:

2010 'Gülen supports Israel. Have you seen him cry for Palestine?'

2011 'Hizmet will establish an electoral alliance with other parties.'

2011 'Hizmet orchestrated the mass arrest of Kurdish politicians, despite the government.'

2012 'Hizmet bugged Erdoğan's office.'

2013 'Hizmet was behind the Gezi park protests'. 'Their judges and prosecutors released the Gezi park protestors.'

2013 'Hizmet did not oppose the coup in Egypt.'

2013 'Hizmet was going to arrest [the then] PM Erdoğan.'

2013 'Gülen does not return to Turkey because he is US controlled.'

2013 Hizmet's Foundation issues a [response these allegations](#).

Step 4: Demonize, vilify and threaten

2012 [Erdoğan allegedly said](#), "if I want, I'll have them declared a terrorist group with one prosecutor and three police officers."¹¹

2013 + Erdoğan and pro-government media demonize, vilify and threaten Gülen and Hizmet through political speeches and fabricated headline

¹⁰ Turkish original [article in Hurriyet](#). English [translation here](#).

¹¹ This was widely reported in the press at the time and even [referred to in a press release issued](#) by the Hizmet-affiliated Journalists and Writers Foundation in 2013.

stories. See para 27 for the type of hate speech used to target Hizmet sympathizers. Fabricated stories in 2013 include the [front cover of three newspapers](#) on the same day alleging that Gülen had hired a US-hitman to assassinate Erdoğan's daughter.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| In Turkey | Hizmet is depicted as CIA/MOSSAD/MI6 funded and supported. Claims include: works for West to undermine and overthrow government; Hizmet is not Muslim; Gülen is a secret cardinal; Hizmet aims to Christianise Turkey and Muslims. |
| In West | Hizmet depicted as an Islamist movement, it is fundamentalist. Claims include: it aims to infiltrate the White House; convert Americans to Islamist extremism; it is more dangerous than Isis. |

Step 5: Judicial preparation

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 2013 – 2014 | Overhaul of the Turkish judicial system, undermining judicial independence and the separation of powers by giving itself almost unlimited authority to reorganise the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK); ¹² replacing the entire HSYK staff with those nominated by the Minister of Justice; creating a new breed of closed-circuit “super judges” with extensive powers and no upward right of appeal; ¹³ and restructuring the Supreme Court of Appeals to name a few measures. |
| 2015 | In a speech to prosecutors, judges, and other members of the judiciary, Erdoğan asks for their help to “wipe out” Hizmet sympathizers. |

Step 6: Take action

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 2013 – 2015 | Purging tens of thousands of people from the state for “Hizmet sympathy”; unlawfully seizing Bank Asya, Zaman newspaper and Hizmet-related universities; closing down 15 TV and radio stations; revoking licenses; knocking down school structures for minor infringements; confiscating businesses owned by people sympathetic to Hizmet. |
| June 2015 | Human Rights report by Rt. Hon. Lord Woolf, Prof Sir Jeffrey Jowell, Rt. Hon Sir Edward Garnier QC and Sarah Palin details human rights violations of AKP government against Hizmet between 2013 and July 2015. States that Hizmet has been principal target of AKP government's human rights abuse. See section “A. Human Rights Violations against Hizmet between 2013 and 2015” above. |

Step 7: Designate as terrorists, criminalise association

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2005 | AKP government attempts to create a new form of “unarmed, nonviolent terrorism” category. This is defeated by opposition led by Hizmet's Zaman newspaper campaign. |
| 2012 | Erdoğan allegedly said , “If I want, I'll have them declared a terrorist group with one prosecutor and three police officers.” |

¹² HSYK is a keystone of Turkish judiciary with oversight power over judges and prosecutors.

¹³ Officially called “Criminal Judges of the Peace.”

- 2014 Erdoğan speaks to NGOs, “We will take over their schools and give them over to you. You must be prepared for that time.”¹⁴
- 2014 Erdoğan declares Hizmet to be “parallel state” and “terrorist organisation” in his speeches. Calls on people to disassociate.
- 2014 National Security Council recommends (Oct 30) and cabinet agrees (Nov 24) to recognise “legally cloaked illegal parallel organisations” as national security threat without court order. [This is added to Red Book](#).¹⁵
- 2015 National Security Council recommends (Jun 29) and cabinet agrees (Jun 29) to designate Hizmet as “parallel state” (“PDY”), without court order. [This is added to Red Book](#).
- 2015/6 Unable to attribute an act of violence to Hizmet, Erdoğan reverts to the 2005 proposal: creating a new form of terrorism, defined as “[unarmed, nonviolent terrorism](#)”.
- 2016 [National Security Council](#) recommends (May, 25) and [cabinet agrees](#) (May, 30) to designate Hizmet as “armed terrorist organisation”, “FETO” (without court order).

Step 8: Mass purge

- July 2016 Coup blamed on Gülen and Hizmet. Mass confiscation of all Hizmet-affiliated schools, charities, foundations and social enterprise businesses. Purge of 100,000+ people from state and private institutions and mass incarceration, including teachers, doctors, academics, journalists, business people, housewives, court employees, imams, referees and even a ballet performer.
- Hotline Presidential and National Intelligence Service hotlines set up for public to anonymously report Gülenist friends and relatives.
- Mob Mob attack on government confiscated buildings formerly owned by Hizmet-inspired companies such as Zaman newspaper and Hizmet bookstores. Hizmet participants beaten on street; Hizmet sponsor and his son killed by group of government supporters. Reports of people thrown out of their homes by neighbours.
- Overseas Coordinated attacks on against Hizmet participants and organisations across the world, including in the UK, Netherlands, Belgium, France and Germany.¹⁶

¹⁴ Most of these stories were reported in media outlets independent or oppositional to government which have since been taken over and shut down by the Turkish authorities (160 media outlets shut since the coup). Once taken over, the archive of these media outlets are deleted. Zaman newspaper’s 9million article archive for example was deleted the same day it was taken over. Therefore, finding media reports of these stories is considerably harder today, which is probably one of the intended outcomes of these archive deletions.

¹⁵ This is added to Turkey’s “Red Book” which lists Turkey’s national security threats. The National Security Council chaired by the President passes “recommendations” for the government, as it did on this occasion.

¹⁶ See HizmetWatch.com.

VI. WHY IS HIZMET SINGLED OUT?

33. Hizmet refused to support Erdoğan's executive presidency ambitions, refused to become Erdoğan's *uncritical* mouthpiece, became increasingly critical from 2011 onwards and is believed by Erdoğan to be behind the 2013 corruption investigations. Erdoğan wants to silence his critics and exact revenge, so targeting Hizmet, regardless of actual culpability, is internally consistent with his logic.
34. Erdoğan's notion of political Islam is antithetical to Hizmet's notion of civil Islam. When founding the AK Party, Erdoğan came closer to Hizmet by renouncing political Islam and identity politics. He became increasingly hostile towards Hizmet as he reverted to his earlier version of political Islam and identity politics which necessitates absolute loyalty, and to achieve that, credible alternative Islamic worldviews must be subjugated or subdued. This is evidenced by Erdoğan's efforts to monopolise religion in the public sphere through the Religious Affairs Directorate, on the one hand, and newly founded state-backed religious foundations on the other.
35. By using Gülen and Hizmet to justify draconian measures, Erdoğan minimises the secularist reaction, as well as reaction from foreign governments. For example, when Ekrem Dumanlı, editor-in-chief of *Zaman* was detained, or Hidayet Karaca, chief executive of Samanyolu Media Group was arrested, or when Kanal Turk TV was unlawfully raided and forcefully unplugged while on-air, there was little official reaction from overseas. The eventual takeover of *Zaman* featured extensively in the press and was condemned by the EU, but then *Zaman* was the largest selling newspaper in Turkey at the time. In contrast, when the editor-in-chief and an editor of the secularist *Cumhuriyet* newspaper were detained by the Turkish police, no less than Joe Biden, the US Vice President visited the editor's homes and met with their spouses. When protestors smashed the windows of *Hurriyet* newspaper, the US Ambassador to Turkey visited the newspaper the very next day. Turkey is able to persecute Hizmet and the Kurds because Western governments do not react in the same way as when this persecution is exacted against secularist elements of Turkish society, which of course is also condemnable.
36. Hizmet's wide network of schools, charities, media and participants fulfils the need for an "everywhere illusion" to be used to justify going after unrelated sectors and people on the pretext that they are actually all part of the same nefarious network. A movement or group less visibly widespread would not have allowed this level of dexterity and flexibility on the part of the AKP government. Hence, it was possible to justify the purge of 2,750 members of the judiciary a day after a coup orchestrated by members of the military. Also, President Erdoğan has been vilifying Hizmet since December 2013. Therefore, it is easier to mobilise mass support by using a ready-made scapegoat. In that sense, "Hizmet-bashing" has become the Turkish Islamists' new form of "Jew-bashing" (indeed, as will be shown below, they often manage to combine the two).

VII. GOVERNMENT NARRATIVES AND ALLEGATIONS

37. President Erdoğan and the AKP government are very keen to use the media strategically to control the public narrative and make allegations to achieve particular goals. When the Gezi Park protests broke out in Turkey in May 2013, Erdoğan claimed the protests were orchestrated by the "international interest lobby" (an anti-Semitic euphemism) in collaboration with "their domestic partners", particularly implicating the Koç conglomerate (rumoured among Turkey's Islamists to be of Jewish descent) to vilify the protestors. As the protests spread across the country, Erdoğan and the pro-government media claimed that a group of half-naked leather-clad protestors had urinated on and abused a "headscarfed sister" and her baby in Istanbul. In another story, Erdoğan claimed that the protestors had done ungodly things in the "godly mosque". He claimed he would produce evidence of these events on film. These stories have since been proven completely fictitious. The purpose of these stories was to frame the protests as a struggle between religion and anti-religion. When the corruption investigations broke in December 2013, Erdoğan and the government claimed, as per Gezi, that it was orchestrated by a "coalition

of foreign powers” through their “domestic pawns”, referring this time to Hizmet as opposed to the Koç group; this allowed Erdoğan to derail the judicial investigations and purge thousands in the process including judges, prosecutors, police and civil servants.

38. Since then, Erdoğan’s default domestic scapegoat has been Gülen and Hizmet. However, even when targeting Hizmet, Erdoğan uses specific allegations for specific purposes. For example, claiming that Hizmet has established a “parallel state” within the state allows the government to purge the state of non-loyalists in their tens of thousands and to undermine the separation of powers. Making statements tantamount to excommunicating Gülen and Hizmet from Islam serves to sever Hizmet’s public support. Claiming that Hizmet is CIA-, MOSSAD-, MI6-funded and coordinated is intended to turn ordinary Muslims against Hizmet. Claiming that Hizmet is in fact a “terrorist organisation” enables the government to proscribe the movement, terrorise its grass roots, and confiscate all of its property and assets. Blaming the coup on Hizmet saved Erdoğan and the government from having to convince others of a “terror-less terror group”, which is what they were having to do until that point, to criminalise Hizmet overseas and to cover up what really happened on the night of the coup. Claiming that Hizmet is secretive helps support the other allegations but also works best outside of Turkey where the more bombastic accusations are unlikely to elicit the type of response the AKP government wants, especially in the West.
39. Nonetheless, given the gravity of these allegations, they deserve to be discussed more closely with the Hizmet response and counter-perspectives, which are usually blocked out by the state-backed AKP propaganda machinery.

A. Allegation 1: “Hizmet is secretive”

The allegation

40. The AKP government claims that Hizmet participants within state institutions are secretive, hiding their true colours. The government uses this allegation to support its claims of a “parallel state” and “infiltration” and to undermine Hizmet in the security conscious West by presenting it as nefarious and insidious.

Response

41. State-employed individuals who are sympathetic to Hizmet do not usually volunteer their religious observance or orientation for the same reason state-employed Turkish citizens who are ethnically Kurdish, Armenian or Jewish, or religiously Alevi, Suleymani or Menzili or ideologically ultranationalist or Marxist do not volunteer their respective backgrounds. This is because the Turkish state continues to profile, discriminate against and persecute people on the unlawful basis of religion, ethnicity and ideology.
42. The modernising elite of the Turkish nation state attempted to create a new “acceptable citizen” typology. [One scholar](#) gave this the acronym “LAST”, which stands for a citizen who is ideologically Laïcist and Atatürkist, religiously non-practising but Sunni, and ethnically Turkish.¹⁷ All those who fell outside this typology, (Alevi, Kurds, Armenians and practising Muslims for example), were to be strictly profiled and controlled. Structures of control were created and re-created to keep the state machinery free of “contaminants” (“infiltration”) and allow the modernizing elite to remain in power regardless of who was in government. These structures of control included constitutional bodies such as the National Security Council, the Constitutional Court, the Presidency, the Higher Education Board, the Higher Election Council and laws such as Anti-Terror Legislation. These structures were used to persecute and discriminate against Turkish citizens in contravention of international human rights law and anti-discrimination legislation. “Non-LAST” state employees continue to hide their backgrounds because these structures of

¹⁷ Ihsan Yılmaz, “Homo LASTus and Lausannian Muslim: Two Paradoxical Social-Engineering Projects to Construct the Best and the Good Citizen in the Kemalist Panopticon” in *Turkish Journal of Politics* Vol. 4 No. 2 Winter 2013, p 107 -126.

control, profiling, persecution and discrimination persist. For example, it is still illegal in Turkey to be a member of a religious group. To blame state employees for being secretive about their personal traits, while the state structure of persecution remains in place, is grossly unfair and tantamount to victim-bashing.

43. This state persecution can extend beyond purging people from the state machinery. Since the 1970s Gülen and Hizmet, like others, have faced persecution in the civil domain with intermittent periods of relative respite. This has created an over-cautious mindset in many Hizmet participants, especially those that have had first hand experience of this persecution. These habits have then been carried outside Turkey, with Hizmet-inspired organisations being reticent about formally declaring their Hizmet link for fear of repercussions at home. Sadly, that fear of repercussion has proven well founded, with many who have publicly linked themselves with the movement seeing their extended family members being punished in Turkey today as a result.
44. Despite this history, Hizmet has taken a number of steps to overcome this. For example, to achieve transparency in Turkey, Hizmet sympathizers began founding trade unions. In 2012, it founded AKTIF SEN, a union for teachers and educators, including those in the state sector; it had 36,000 members. [It was forced to shut](#) within less than a year on April 18, 2013 by the AKP government. In [January 2014](#) Hizmet sympathizers [opened 19 trade unions](#) covering almost all areas of trade, profession and vocation. By founding trade unions with a clear Hizmet-affiliated identity, Hizmet sought to achieve transparency in the public and private sector. However, despite its accusations of transparency, the AKP government forced the closure of all these trade unions and is now using membership to them as proof of guilt.
45. Beyond Turkey, a growing number of Hizmet-inspired organisations, educational and dialogue, now state their Hizmet affiliation on their websites. Moreover, in addition to declaring their link to Hizmet's teachings, many Hizmet organisations are now declaring their link to each other by coming together under federations and consortiums. See [VOICES](#) in the UK since 2013, [FEDACTIO](#) in Belgium and [Turkic American Alliance](#) in the U.S. since 2010 for some examples. There are many more like this, some which link on the basis of geography, others on the basis of sector. Moreover, Hizmet has been encouraging academic and journalistic scrutiny and critique since the late 1990s by co-organising peer-reviewed academic conferences and cooperating with scholars wanting to conduct extensive ethno-graphic fieldwork studies or journalists wishing to probe through interviews or documentaries.¹⁸
46. Gülen is not a secretive person; he is and has been a public figure since the 1970s, delivering public sermons and conferences and authoring over 60 books. He continues to give weekly podcast talks. He has given interviews to almost all leading world media outlets since the 1990s. Following the December 2013 corruption scandals, he gave an extensive interview to the BBC and more recently to Fareed Zakariya on CNN. Following the coup, Gülen gave three press conferences over three consecutive days answering over fifty questions put to him in person. When visited, he permits journalists who wish to do so, to see and record in his bedroom. As attested to by many scholars who have studied him, Gülen's teachings are mainstream Sunni/Hanafi and do not amount to a new religion or religious sect. The movement's core principles have been to be engaged with wider society and to offer services that are inclusive. What is more, Hizmet has been very active in the U.S., the country with the most advanced intelligence gathering capacity. If Gülen and Hizmet were engaged in some insidious criminal plot it would have been detected by one of the U.S. intelligence services by now.
47. Part of the problem with secrecy relates to the perspective of the beholder. As noted above, Hizmet combines characteristics that we are not used to seeing combined in such a way: faith-inspired (in motivation) yet faith-neutral/inclusive (in manifestation); informed by Qur'anic principles yet inclusive and non-missionary; predominantly Muslim but proactively engaging with wider society and attempting to respond constructively to

¹⁸ Such as TV interviews including 60 Minutes in US, HardTalk in UK and Conflict Zone in Germany.

modern and post-modern ideas and lifestyles. As a result, Hizmet's teachings and praxis can defy pre-conceived notions of Muslim social movement behaviour and patterns. Instead of revising these notions, some prefer to hold onto them insisting there is a hidden agenda and perpetuating the idea of Hizmet is secretive. These notions are impossible to disprove.

B. Allegation 2: "Infiltrating the state"

The allegation

48. This allegation is used hand in hand with the "parallel state" allegation. The infiltration allegation suggests that certain people in the state structure have no right to be there. To support this allegation, the AKP government claims that Gülen supporters cheated in state employee entrance exams and tests. The infiltration allegation enables the government to dismiss any state employee not on the basis of wrongdoing after becoming a state employee but on the basis of having cheated to get there. This allegation has also allowed the government to replace entrance exams with interviews only; a process which is easier to abuse and more difficult to challenge.

Response

49. The term "infiltration" is discriminatory and was used by the secularist establishment against anyone deemed to be a second-class citizen, including pious Muslims, Kurds and Alevis. As a term, it has no legal standing in the criminal justice system of Turkey. The AKP government has inherited the structures and narratives of control and is using them to persecute others as it was once persecuted by its secularist predecessors. Turkish citizens of whatever religious leaning have the right under the Turkish Constitution to any public office in Turkey; therefore, their rightful occupation of state employment cannot be described as "infiltration." If anything, it is best described as integration or upward social mobility.

50. Hizmet has encouraged upward social mobility through its number one priority, that is nondenominational schools for boys and girls across the country. By the time these schools were forcefully seized by the Turkish government, Hizmet had founded and was operating approximately 800 of the best schools in Turkey. With 800 of the best schools in the country, it is a statistical inevitability that graduates from these schools are disproportionately represented in the public and private sector. In some ways this is akin to the Oxbridge effect within the UK civil service, where 57% of Britain's permanent secretaries are reported to have graduated from either Oxford or Cambridge (a ratio which is many times higher than that of Hizmet school graduates in the Turkish civil service). Here, "presence" and "parallel" are being deliberately conflated by the Turkish government. That the presence is well-known makes the "parallel structure" accusation seem far more plausible than it actually is.

51. The Turkish government claims that Hizmet sought to infiltrate the Turkish state to undermine the government and to obtain all state and political power for itself. Yet Gülen has been tried and acquitted of these charges by a staunchly secular judiciary, in a trial that lasted 6 years from 2000 to 2006, with his acquittal being upheld in 2008. This narrative also runs contrary to Hizmet's clear and on-going efforts to move Hizmet outside Turkey since the 1980s. As a result, Hizmet has more schools outside than inside Turkey. Why would a movement whose strategic objective and obsession is to gain state power in Turkey, exert so much effort in diverting its human resources and attention outside Turkey? If becoming transnational were also part of a political strategy, surely the movement would have focused on geo-strategic capitals. Yet Hizmet has more schools in Madagascar than it has in the UK, and more schools in [Nigeria](#) than it has in Washington DC, Paris, Berlin and Brussels, combined.

C. Allegation 3: “Parallel State”

The allegation and what it enabled

52. The allegation is that Gülen has set up a parallel state structure within the Turkish state with its own chain of command outside that of the official one. The AKP government first made this allegation in response to the December 2013 corruption investigations, which implicated several government ministers and Erdoğan’s son. Framing the events as planned and executed by a “coalition of foreign powers” through their “domestic pawns” who had set up a parallel state, the AKP government moved swiftly to purge the investigating prosecutors, judges and police officers. This was followed by a more extensive purge of the police force, targeting all Organised Crime and Fraud Units across the country to disrupt any other judicial investigation that the government was unaware of. In this flurry, approximately sixty thousand state employees were purged through demotion and dismissal including police officers, prosecutors, judges and civil servants.
53. Having derailed the original corruption investigations, the AKP government was aware that without evidence, its “parallel state” allegations would fail at trial, triggering the re-opening of the investigations. To avoid this, the AKP government undertook a massive overhaul of the Turkish judicial system, undermining judicial independence and the separation of powers by amending the regulation on judicial policing, enabling government to be immediately informed of judicial investigations into alleged government corruption; giving itself almost unlimited authority to reorganise Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK); replacing the entire HSYK staff with those nominated by the Minister of Justice; creating a new breed of closed-circuit “super judges” with extensive powers and no upward right of appeal and appointing a small number of specially vetted judges to the position; and restructuring the Supreme Court of Appeals. Some argue that the AKP government began creating its own parallel state at this point. That the government took these measures while knowing that it would seriously damage international confidence in the eventual verdict of these trials and that it would fail on the grounds of fair trial at the European Court of Human Rights, is indicative of its own lack of confidence in the “parallel state” accusations.

Response

54. Gülen has denied that he has encouraged the creation of any parallel state or the instigation of any illegal activity in the Turkish state. Furthermore, he has denied that he had any involvement whatsoever with the corruption investigations or that he encouraged them to be carried out. However, Gülen also said that he supports the right and responsibility of the judiciary to prosecute any person who has engaged in any illegal activity whatsoever, in accordance with the rule of law and due process. He called on the government to immediately turn over any evidence they had to support their claims against Hizmet so that a speedy investigation could be carried out.
55. Instead of turning over evidence, Erdoğan and his team have offered a number of arguments. The first, that: “[t]he investigating police officers did not inform their superiors within the police force, despite the fact that the probe went on for 15 months.” It later transpired that the police could not do so without the prosecutor’s authorisation due to a law passed by the AKP government in 2004 and a directive in 2005. When this transpired, other arguments were offered: “the extensive evidence leaks from the investigations” — unfortunately, not at all uncommon in Turkey and other parts of the world; “the curious timing of the wave of detentions three months before the local elections” — evidence in the public domain suggests that the suspects had been tipped off about the on-going investigations, forcing the prosecution to act when they did; “the investigations target the country’s leading construction companies” — justifiable since the investigations concern corruption and bribery involving state-tendered construction projects. The judiciary is not beyond criticism, but none of the above supports the “parallel state” accusation.

56. Later, a number of senior AKP members claimed they had come by hard evidence proving the existence of the “parallel state” and that they would make this evidence public (for example, accusations by Mehmet Ali Sahin, the then Speaker of the House and Ahmet Davutoğlu, the then Foreign Secretary). The response of well-known Hizmet figures and Hizmet-affiliated media was to call on both individuals to immediately turn over the evidence to the prosecutors and to the public. However, despite repeated reminders, no such evidence has been disclosed to the public, nor is there any reason to believe that it has been turned over to the prosecutors. If there were such evidence, the Turkish government would not have overhauled the judiciary to guarantee a conviction.
57. If the Hizmet movement had created a parallel state as argued by the AKP government, Hizmet institutions and participants would not be so supportive of Turkey’s accession to the EU, which necessitates structural changes ushering in greater transparency, accountability, the rule of law, meritocracy, a new progressive civilian constitution, greater freedoms and international interconnectedness because doing so would inevitably lead to self-exposure.
58. The Turkish state structure is deeply sectarian and problematic. Given the absence of entrenched institutionalised structures guaranteeing impartiality, meritocracy and the rule of law, public employees have less confidence in the system than they do in *like-minded* colleagues. This structural problem exacerbates favouritism within the Turkish state machinery. As a result, there is a widespread view that Turkish state employees of a particular ethnic background (e.g., Kurdish, Armenian or Jewish), ideology (e.g., secularist, ultranationalist, Marxist) or religious orientation (e.g., Alevi, Suleymani, Menzili, Hizmet) tend to favour their own. Where this is practised, it is an institutional problem, not an Alevi or Hizmet one, for example. If the Turkish government had cracked down on favouritism of all sorts, it would draw widespread support from all sections of society, including the vast majority of Hizmet sympathizers. After all, ending such problematic practices is why Hizmet has supported Turkey’s accession to the EU since the 1980s. But the government is taking a widespread institutionalised practice, attributing it exclusively to alleged Hizmet-inspired public officials, then equating those officials with an entire social movement; this reasoning allows them to grossly misrepresent the alleged favouritism as “parallelism” and “infiltration.”

D. Allegation 4: “FETO and Coup”

The allegation and what it enabled

59. The allegations that Hizmet is a terrorist organisation and that it orchestrated Turkey’s failed coup are two separate allegations. Erdoğan declared Hizmet to be a terrorist organisation in his speeches in 2014 and 2015. In 2015 and 2016, Erdoğan argued in favour of defining a new category of terrorism, called “unarmed, nonviolent terrorism”.¹⁹ In May 2016, the National Security Council and cabinet formally designated Hizmet as an “armed terrorist organisation” and named this as “FETO” (acronym for “Fethullah Terrorist Organisation”). Given Turkish law, these are unlawful designations (see para 65). Therefore, Hizmet was declared as a terrorist organisation before the failed coup, which took place on July 15, 2016 (see para 32, stage 7 for chronology).
60. The failed coup took place on July 15, 2016 at approximately 10 p.m. local time. Within two hours of its start, while it was still underway, President Erdoğan pinned the coup attempt on Gülen and Hizmet. In the following days, the AKP government’s narrative evolved to include references to the West, US, and the UK, as backers of the coup.²⁰ These allegations have featured extensively in government media. John Kerry, U.S. Secretary of State, has had to warn that such statements are damaging to U.S./Turkey

¹⁹ In Turkish “silahsız teror örgütü”

²⁰ Numerous AKP government Ministers have made these accusations, not least, the Interior Minister Suleyman Soyly, President Senior Advisor and AKP MP Burhan Kuzu, AKP Ankara Mayor Melih Gokcek as well as cut-throat government pundits. Anglophobia is on the rise in Turkey.

relations. Richard Moore, British Ambassador to Turkey has had to directly challenge and correct allegations of UK's involvement in Turkey's recent troubles.

61. The failed coup enabled the AKP government to renew its purge (over 100,000 at the time of writing) of the Turkish state of non-loyalists on the pretext of their connection to Hizmet. The AKP government was bent on designating Hizmet as a "terrorist organisation" even before the coup because it was aware that its previous allegations against Hizmet (i.e., "parallel state") were insufficient to criminalise the Hizmet movement en masse, uproot its grassroots support and seize all assets belonging to Hizmet foundations and its supporters. The "terrorist" label was needed to enable these outcomes.²¹ Pinning the coup on Hizmet enabled the AKP government to justify its persecution of Hizmet and its pre-designation of it as an "armed terrorist organisation."

Response

i. Gülen's immediate response to "FETO" and coup allegations

62. Gülen denies any involvement in any form of violence and terrorism whatsoever. In fact, Gülen has consistently and unequivocally condemned terrorism and has stated that no reason whatsoever can justify such acts. He was one of the first Muslim leaders to publicly condemn the 9/11 attacks by taking out an ad in the Wall Street Journal and New York Times. Similarly, he condemned the 7/7 attacks in London and other terrorist attacks across the world. His grounds for opposing violence and terrorism are [anchored in his teachings and understandings of Islam](#).²² Gülen and Hizmet have repeatedly challenged the government to prove their wild accusations.
63. Within hours of the coup, Gülen denied any involvement and condemned it in the strongest of terms. Given the government's unrelenting accusations, Gülen issued two written statements within twelve hours and gave three press conferences within three days of the coup answering over fifty questions put to him in person. In short, Gülen's immediate response to Erdoğan's accusations can be summarised as (i) denial of any involvement in the coup, (ii) unequivocal condemnation of the coup, (iii) noting that he has personally suffered from past coups and that violence is completely antithetical to his teachings, (iv) noting the oddities of the failed coup, (v) stating that it looks like a mixed group of military officers were involved, and (vi) calling for an international body to investigate the coup and stating that he would immediately return to Turkey if that body implicated him in any way. When asked by a journalist if people inspired by him participated in the coup he answered by saying that he could not know who was or was not inspired by his teachings and that if there were any such people that participated in the coup that they had betrayed his teachings alongside committing a heinous crime.

ii. Legal grounds

64. Erdoğan and the AKP government declared Hizmet to be a terrorist organisation in 2014. What is deeply troubling about this is that it was done without alleging a single act of violence, let alone an act of terrorism. While there are differing definitions of terrorism, their unchanging feature is that it involves violence. Up to this point, whatever the movement was alleged to have done, it could not be defined as terrorism, as the movement had a forty-year history of activism with not a single act of violence on its record. Gülen was known for consistently advocating non-violence and was even mocked for this by today's Islamists of Turkey. This put the AKP government in a rather odd position which it attempted to circumvent by arguing for a new category of terrorism, which it called "unarmed, nonviolent (and therefore terror-less) terrorism". This proves that the AKP government was obsessed with labelling Hizmet as being a terrorist group rather than genuinely seeking to identify terrorism.

²¹ This was also in line with rumours that featured in mainstream media in 2012 that Erdoğan had allegedly said that if pushed, he would have Hizmet declared to be a terrorist organisation with one prosecutor and two police officers."

²² Ozcan Keles and Ismail Mesut Sezgin, "Part One: Hizmet's Theological Refutation" in *A Hizmet Approach to Rooting Out Violence Extremism* (London: Centre for Hizmet Studies, 2015) p 17-27. pages 17 to 27.

65. According to Turkish law, in the absence of a United Nations designation, an organisation can only be designated as “terrorist” by a high court (Yargıtay) decision. Even today, there is no high court decision in Turkey or abroad recognising the existence of “FETO” or “PDY”. Therefore, the Turkish government’s Cabinet decree is both unlawful and defamatory. The unqualified use of these terms amounts to defamation according to Turkish law as established during the trial of the “alleged Ergenekon organisation.” Furthermore, despite being active in over 160 countries, no Hizmet organisation or group of people has been convicted of any crime, let alone crimes that remotely resonate with Turkey’s accusations against Gülen and Hizmet.
66. Allegations against Gülen are not new. They were levelled in the past by the staunchly secular judiciary and state establishment. Many of judicial investigations failed to unearth any credible evidence to prosecute. Following the post-modern coup of 1997, Gülen was prosecuted on the grounds of “establishing an illegal organisation to undermine the secular state” and “terrorism”. The trial lasted six years and included any piece of circumstantial evidence that the state could amass on Gülen since the 1970s. Despite this, Gülen was acquitted of all charges in 2006 and his acquittal was upheld in the Court of Appeal in 2008. Therefore, not only is there no court decision providing legal grounds for the “FETO” accusation, there is an acquittal as of 2006 and 2008 showing the reverse.

iii. Prejudged

67. The government is pinning almost every negative development in Turkey since December 2013 on Gülen and Hizmet, from a critical EU progress report to the downing of the Russian jet. Hizmet was prejudged as a terrorist organisation before being alleged as having committed any act of terror. Being blamed for Turkey’s failed coup is no exception. Within two hours of the tanks rolling, President Erdoğan called into CNN Turk. He admitted that he was unaware of the whereabouts of his chief of general staff and head of intelligence, that he therefore had not conferred with either, did not have official intelligence before him and could not have known the full facts of the coup, as the facts were still unfolding. In those circumstances, at the time of his call to CNN Turk, there would have been no way of him knowing for certain whether his chief of general staff and head of national intelligence were involved in the coup or not. Yet, despite all this, Erdoğan claimed that he was sure that the coup was masterminded and orchestrated by Gülen and Hizmet.
68. On what evidence was Erdoğan’s claim based? Did not declaring Gülen the culprit before the judicial investigation into the coup was launched seriously undermine the main purpose of the investigation, to determine culpability? Does the presidential narrative not seriously distort the evidence and witness statements that were yet to be collected? Erdoğan has made many accusations before (group of men urinating on “headscarfed-sister”; Gezi protestors doing ungodly stuff in mosque; Gülen hiring US hitman to assassinate his daughter, etc.) none of which have ever been proven despite his promising release dates for definitive video and documentary evidence. And even now, the government narrative implicates the US (and UK) as backers of the coup. Therefore, do we not have sufficient grounds for serious caution and scepticism concerning the AKP government’s claims regarding the coup?

iv. Unchallengeable narrative

69. The Chilcot Inquiry into the Iraq war states that one of the reasons the UK government got it wrong was because the government’s “basic assumption” (that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction) was never challenged, from within the intelligence or policy community of the state. The large number of intelligence reports about Iraq’s activities were interpreted from the perspective that Iraq’s objectives were to conceal its programmes. Accordingly, Sir Chilcot recommends that government’s have in-built mechanisms and systems through which policy assumptions, however plausible they may appear to be, are rigorously challenged. Applied to Turkey, can any organ of the Turkish state or

government (or even civil society) challenge President Erdoğan's claims vis-a-vis Gülen and Hizmet without being crushed as "coup-supporting crypto Gülenists" in the process?

70. Instead of ensuring that there are in-built mechanisms within the state and government to challenge government assumptions, there is a concerted effort in the opposite direction. Even the courts are not exempt from this. Only this week, three judges that ruled that downloading a messaging app could not prove membership of a legally non-existent terrorist organisation ("FETO") were suspended and are now being investigated for being members of that legally non-existent organisation themselves. Three weeks prior to that a panel of judges were [immediately replaced](#) when three out of four of them decided that a group of 24 academics should not be charged for lack of evidence. Needless to say, the renewed panel of judges ruled unanimously in favour of charging all 24 academics on terror-related offences. In 2015, two judges who ruled in favour of the bail application of Hidayet Karaca and police officers, were suspended within [two, and arrested and charged, within four days](#). They are still held on remand.
71. As a result, the AKP government is not only removing the capacity of state and government bodies to challenge government policy and assumptions, it is undermining the separation of powers. Moreover, it is also removing the capacity of the media and civil society from holding the government to account. The government has shut down scores of media outlets, taken over newspapers, jailed and deported journalists before and after the coup. Turkey has shut down 170 media outlets since the failed coup and is once again the largest incarcerator of journalists in the world, surpassing Russia, Egypt and Iran, combined. As a result, Amnesty International has reported that there is an ["atmosphere of fear"](#)²³ in the country, preventing people from challenging or even asking legitimate questions of the government narrative on the failed coup. Even Amnesty International have been accused by the AKP government of being Gülen-linked for criticising it ([see 6:38 – 6:58 of video](#)).

v. Three reasons why it is nonsensical for Hizmet to mastermind a coup

72. Masterminding or partnering in a coup would amount to ethical and intellectual suicide for Hizmet. Hizmet's foundational teachings rest on non-violence. This teaching, consistently espoused and developed since the 1970s, serves as the ethical and intellectual bedrock on which Hizmet's work in education, dialogue and religion is based. Masterminding or partnering in a coup, successful or not, would completely undermine and delegitimise the ethical and intellectual basis of Hizmet's teachings. For a social movement, maintaining moral and intellectual consistency is extremely important since it is the integrity of those teachings that keeps the movement together. This has been recognised by a number of journalists and scholars, including [Gareth Jenkins](#) and Joshua Hendrik, a critical scholar who has studied and published on the movement who states that if Gülen helped orchestrate the coup it would amount to ["one of the most fantastic frauds in modern history."](#)
73. Masterminding or partnering in a coup attempt would also delegitimise the movement around the world. Hizmet has been globalising for the past thirty years. As a result, and even before its persecution in Turkey, Hizmet had founded and was running approximately 2000 schools in over 160 countries. It had more schools and projects outside Turkey than inside. A coup attempt would be [organisational suicide](#) for the movement in the other countries in which it operates, from fully-fledged democracies to autocratic regimes. Such a reckless act, even if successful, would yield a minuscule gain and substantial losses.
74. By July 2016, the Turkish government was running out of steam and capacity to continue purging. When asked why 2,750 judges and prosecutors were purged a day after the coup Erdoğan said, "We had already identified these individuals but couldn't get rid of them within the law [as it was then]." The coup allowed the AKP government to do this. Elsewhere he said, "the coup was a God send." So why would Hizmet engage in an act

²³ Also, see this article by [Andrew Gardner](#), Researcher on Turkey for Amnesty International.

that would re-fuel Erdoğan's capacity to persecute and purge further? The government's answer is that Hizmet got wind of a purge at the forthcoming August military reshuffle and that it attempted to prevent this with a coup. But rumours of a military purge have been in circulation since December 2013; so why not then but now. Secondly, even if the government and military had agreed to a purge in the military in August 2016, the numbers would have been in the hundreds at most, not a 100,000 from all sectors as has been the case. Erdoğan proved that he could purge 60,000 post December 2013, so the putschists would have had an idea of the scale of purge should the coup fail. Why would Hizmet risk saving hundreds at the risk of losing an alleged 100,000 supporters and sympathizers? It is completely nonsensical and is diametrically opposed to the characterisation of Hizmet as extremely calculating, cautious and strategic.

vi. "Evidence implicating Gülen"

75. Since the failed coup, the AKP government and pro-government media have focused on six pieces of "evidence" which they claim prove their accusations. On September 9, 2016, an article was published, which evaluates these claims in an impassioned point-by-point basis. Please [refer to that article](#) to see how none of the those six pieces of so-called evidence stands up to scrutiny. To avoid repeating what is in that article, we will briefly discuss the so-called "most damning piece of evidence against Gulen". In doing so, we will demonstrate that it is anything but.
76. The AKP government claims that the Chief of General Staff Hulüsi Akar's has said in his statement that the putschist leaders offered to put him in touch with Fethullah Gülen to convince him to join the coup. Many commentators take this statement as proof of Gülen's guilt. No one for example in Turkey has pointed out that this alleged offer was made after the coup was very obviously failing. That being the case, why could this offer not have been made by the putschist leaders to mislead and misdirect the Chief of General Staff as to the real allegiance of the putschist orchestrators? It is also claimed that these crypto "Gülenists" are extremely cautious, cunning and stealthy. If that is the case, wouldn't the putschists know that a call connecting the Chief of General Staff in Ankara with Gülen in Pennsylvania, on the night of the coup, would be intercepted by numerous foreign intelligence agencies, thereby alerting them as to the real mastermind behind the attempted overthrow? Those that claim that this was a Gülenist coup explain the Kemalist tone and language of the coup declaration as a ploy by Gülenists to hide behind a Kemalist cloak. But why would a group go to such lengths to cover its tracks, and then volunteer its affiliation to no less than the Chief of General Staff? There are other problems with this claim but not even these questions were asked in Turkey or even beyond.
77. As for confessions, Amnesty has reported that there is credible evidence of detainees being tortured, beaten and raped (see Amnesty report [here](#) and [here](#)). The state-run AA agency has published images and footage of bruised and battered detainees that corroborate the claims of torture and inhumane treatment (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)). Selcuk Kozagacli, Director of Progressive Lawyers Association, known to be Kemalist organisation, said he [had personal knowledge](#) of "FETO" detainees being hospitalised and in need of surgery as a result of being raped. So far, 22 detainees have reportedly died in custody, including a teacher and prosecutor. Ordinarily, there is ample grounds to have these "confessions" thrown out if and when the case is tried before an impartial court. By making it known that it uses these tactics, the AKP government proves that it is focused on scaring people into line, rather than gathering untainted evidence for a successful prosecution that will satisfy international public opinion.

vii. Major anomalies of the government's coup narrative: the irrational ratio

78. It is widely reported that [approximately 7,500](#) military personnel have been detained on charges of complicity in the attempted putsch. However, government sources and pro-government media allege that the actual "FETO" presence in the military is many folds higher. Some have reported numbers as high as 70,000. [Milliyet has reported](#) that the judiciary believes the number to be closer to 22,000. Since even pro-government media

do not suggest that all 7,500 putschists were alleged “FETO” members, with many being unsuspecting conscripts, that raises the obvious question of why, even by the government’s narrative, the vast majority of alleged “FETO” members did not support the alleged “FETO” coup.

79. Between December 2013 and 2015, the government is reported to have purged 45,000 police officers of all ranks (through demotion, reassignment and dismissal); they would have us believe that they did this to purge “FETO” members from the police force. Since the coup, the government has purged a further 20,000 police officers on the same grounds. If this alleged organisation had approximately 60,000 police officers, why did they not take part in this coup? If Hizmet had 60,000 police officers and 22,000 or 70,000 military officers, that would amount to 82,000 or 130,000 weapons-trained personnel against the 7,500 putschists that actually did take part. If all the putschists were Hizmet-affiliated, which even the most cut-throat government pundits do not claim, that would suggest that only 5 – 10 % of alleged “FETO” members supported the alleged “FETO” coup. How can this be a “FETO” coup when, by the government’s own account, 90 to 95% of the “FETO” members did not support it.
80. There were very few three or four star generals among the putschists; those that were detained that night were Akin Ozturk, Adem Huduti, Erdal Ozturk and one other. However, so far, the AKP government has purged approximately 160 three and four star generals. If there were 160 “FETO” generals, why did only a handful take part in the alleged “FETO” coup? Given their command, surely their support for the coup would have made an enormous difference. Yet these so-called “FETO” generals did not support this alleged “FETO” coup.
81. Since the coup, [stories are surfacing](#) of courageous and heroic police officers risking their lives to fight against the putschists. Their stories on the night of the coup are detailed and corroborated and therefore easily verifiable. Yet scores of police officers that fought against the putschists are now being purged for being “FETO” members. Why would “FETO” police officers, fight against “FETO” military officers to stop a “FETO” coup? Finally in this vein, it was [widely reported](#) in the Turkish press, including by government pundits such as Abdulkadir Selvi, that Turkey’s National Intelligence Services first found out about the coup as a result of Major H.A.’s tip-off. Major H.A. is reported to have found out about the coup and passed on this information in person. As a result of this news, the head of the National Intelligence Service is said to have informed the Chief of General Staff at 4pm. From this point on, plans were conducted to thwart the impending coup. Clearly therefore Major H.A. should have been congratulated as a national hero as he had helped prevent the coup. It is now reported, including by [Abdulkadir Selvi](#), that Major H.A. has since been purged on account of being a “FETO” coup member. Why would a “FETO” coup member tip-off the intelligence services of a “FETO” coup?
82. There are other major anomalies in the government’s narrative which are not specifically related to the government’s narrative on Gülen or Hizmet. These relate to what Erdoğan knew and when, why the head of intelligence and military did not inform the president and prime minister of the impending coup, contradictory witness statements concerning the Chief of General Staff, contradictory government statements and actions, and the inexplicable actions of the putschists. Given that these are not directly related to the accusations about Gülen or Hizmet I have not included these additional major anomalies here.

viii. Independent voices on the government's coup narrative

83. Pro-government media are keen to give the impression that there is a consensus among independent observers that Gülen masterminded this coup. Despite their best efforts at amplifying their own narrative while suppressing any critical voices or contradictory pieces of evidence, there is no such consensus. What consensus there is, is that despite the intervening period, there is far too much that is still unknown and that the failed overthrow exhibited many oddities. While there are commentators supporting the AKP's version of events, there are others that question this narrative. The following are some examples:

- [James Clapper](#), **Director of the US National Intelligence**, stated that they did not see any intelligence indicating Gülen's involvement in the coup attempt. Given Mr Clapper's position, this is significant.
- [Eric-Jan Zürcher](#), **professor and expert on Turkey**, disputes the official Turkish government story. He suggests that other groups involved in the attempt are probably swallowing Erdoğan's story for self-protection.
- [Gareth Jenkins](#), **Nonresident Senior Fellow with the Joint Center's Silk Road Studies Program**, suggested that "there are problems with the AKP's simplistic narrative that the putsch was a purely Gülenist affair – not least because at least some of the officers who have confessed to playing an active role are known to be hard-line Kemalists."
- [Ahmet Şık](#), **Turkish Journalist and Author**, said in an interview to Deutsche Welle that among the names who were detained, there were people who are neo-nationalists and staunch opponents of Hizmet.
- [Bill Park](#), **Senior Lecturer in the Department of Defence Studies, King's College, London University**, says Turkey is turning into a party state and expresses serious doubt as to its version of events of the coup.
- [A Guardian editorial](#), "Few outside observers believe that the plotters were not for the most part old-fashioned secularists in the tradition of the Turkish armed forces."
- [Dr David Tittensor](#), **scholar on Gülen and Hizmet**, said he did not believe the Gülen movement was behind Turkey's failed coup.
- [Graham Fuller](#), **Middle East Expert and former CIA officer**, "Why would Gülen choose to attempt a coup that's contrary to all his views and at a time of maximum weakness vis-a-vis Erdoğan?"
- [Frank Nordhausen & Josef Hufelschulte](#), **intelligence expert**, "half an hour after the fire began, British Intelligence Agency GCHQ intercepted calls, emails and SMS from Turkish Government saying that the purges would begin the next day and that Gülen should be presented as the instigator of the coup d ' état". FOCUS, 24 July 2016, p. 26.
- [Svante Cornell](#), **Director of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, Johns Hopkins University**, said that "while it is very likely that Gülenist officers were involved, it is equally obvious that they could not have carried this out on their own. The more senior generals apparently involved do not seem to have any Gülenist affiliations."
- [Michael Rubin](#) **of AEI** stated that Gülen never had a powerbase in the military because "the Turkish General Staff has long vetted officer candidates to prevent Gülen's followers from rising through the ranks." Rubin discussed the possibility of Kemalist officers other than the ones Erdoğan hand-picked being among the coup plotters.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

1. Commensurate reaction: Turkey is a key ally of the UK. Therefore, Turkey's success and direction matters to the UK. By every measure, Turkey has been regressing since 2013. The UK's approach during this time has been one of appeasement. Clearly, that is not working. Since the failed coup, Turkey has purged 100,000 people and is detaining and holding on remand 70,000. Amnesty and others have reported use of torture, beatings and rape. The UK must be able to adopt a language and approach that is commensurate with the depth, breadth and gravity of the human rights and rule of law violations being committed by the AKP government. Being honest, both in public and private, should not mean being unfriendly. In fact, being a genuine ally and friend of Turkey and the Turkish people, respectively, necessitates this candid and robust approach.
2. Naming it: President Erdoğan and the AKP government have repeatedly vowed to "eradicate", "exterminate" "annihilate" and "cleanse Turkey and the world of" Hizmet since 2013. They have taken comprehensive measures in this regard. Yet the UK government and Foreign Office refrains from referring to Hizmet sympathizers as victims of these human rights and rule of law violations. Naming what is happening to whom is the first step to overcoming it. Naming Hizmet sympathizers as one of those most persecuted in Turkey since 2013 will act as a deterrent. This is a humanitarian necessity. Failing to do this, in the current context, validates the actions of the AKP government.
3. International commission: A great deal rests on who did what in relation to Turkey's failed coup. Having this investigated by an impartial international commission is, above all, in Turkey's interest. Offering to explore this route through the United Nations would be a good way of impressing on Turkey the importance of this. Failing that, the UK government could offer its assistance in investigating the run-up to and aftermath of the coup.
4. Annual review: Given the importance of Turkey and the speed at which things are developing, to publish an annual report on Turkey. This would act as mechanism through which to engage with interested parties and to demonstrate the importance of Turkey for the UK.
5. Right to respond without fear of reprisal: As on this occasion, to give accused parties the opportunity to respond to the allegations that are being made against them and thereby arrive at a more grounded estimation of the matter at hand.
6. Exporting Turkey's problems: To recognise that Turkey has adopted the pursuit of Hizmet as its number one foreign policy objective and the ramifications that flow from this. To note that the AKP government has been working towards mobilising and politicising the Turkish and Muslim diaspora, which it is doing by exporting Turkey's polarising politics overseas through official and unofficial organs and channels. This has led to whole communities being physically and verbally attacked and targeted by government supporters overseas. To ensure that this stops immediately.
7. Religious political narrative: To recognise the religiously infused political narrative and its underlying ideology and the impact this has on radicalising people in Turkey and overseas.

IX. RECOMMENDED SOURCES

1. **A Report on the Rule of Law and Respect for Human Rights in Turkey since December 2013:** Covers human rights and rule of law abuse against Hizmet between December 2013 and July 2015. Investigated and authored by The Rt. Hon. Lord Wolf, Sir Jeffrey Jowell KCMG QC, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Garnier QC MP, and Sarah Palin (July 2015).
[Full report and executive summary here.](#)
2. **Demonizing the Hizmet Movement Through Media in Turkey: Front Covers They Don't Want You To See:** Provides a small selection of front covers of pro-government media between 2014 and 2015 with translations of only the headlines. Demonstrates the systematic, relentless and xenophobic nature of the AKP media vilification against Hizmet and Gülen.
[Full report here.](#)
3. **The Failed Military Coup in Turkey and the Mass Purges: A Civil Society Perspective:** A report prepared by the Alliance for Shared Values, explaining other major anomalies of the AKP government's failed coup narrative.
[This report can be downloaded here.](#)
4. **Questions we dare not ask: Gülen and the coup:** An online article which methodically deconstructs the six pieces of so-called "evidence" that allegedly proves the AKP government's claims against Gülen and the coup. Each "evidence" is evaluated in a point-by-point basis.
[The article can be accessed here.](#)
5. **A Hizmet Approach to Rooting out Violence Extremism:** A report examining Hizmet's thought and practice on tackling violent extremism claiming an Islamic justification. The report looks at Gülen's theologically-anchored response and refutation to various forms of terrorism. It then examines Hizmet's positive counter narrative and how its praxis amounts to what is coined "deradicalisation by default".
[The report can be downloaded here.](#)
6. **HIZMETWATCH.COM and TURKEYPURGE.COM:** HizmetWatch traces attacks against Hizmet-inspired people and organisations across the world post-failed-coup, with a particular emphasis on Europe. TurkeyPurge focuses on the purge in Turkey post-failed-coup.
[HizmetWatch](#) and [TurkeyPurge](#).