

Why Are Former Political Prisoners Being Arrested Again?

(Translated)

Today, 23 citizens are being tried in Tashkent, each of these Shabab (men) was previously imprisoned during the era of the tyrant Karimov and remained in prison until his death. They were sentenced in 1999-2000 for their membership in Hizb ut Tahrir, the political Islamic party. They had additional terms added multiple times while in detention, enduring extremely harsh conditions for 20 years or more. During that period, as a result of the mass arrests in 1999, thousands of male and female da'wah carriers from different regions in Uzbekistan were arrested. During those dark years, and as a result of torture that led to murder, beatings in prisons, and extremely harsh inhumane conditions, the bodies of hundreds of our brothers were returned to their families. Their bodies, filled with bruises, silently told the horrific story of torture in the cells. The bodies of our brothers who were killed by being scalded with boiling water, having their nails pulled out, their chests cracked open, and left at their homes as blackened corpses from beatings, shattered the hearts of their parents and children's families.

And when Mirziyoyev, who came to power after the grim death of the tyrant Karimov, began releasing the Shabab of Hizb ut Tahrir who were in prison after their sentences had ended, it seemed as if happiness returned to the homes of the oppressed. But this joy was short-lived, as Mirziyoyev succumbed to the directives of colonizers like Russia and the advice of some of the traitorous gangs surrounding him, reactivating the repressive machinery of his instructor Karimov. Investigations, executions, persecutions, and re-arrests in detention centres began to escalate. During the investigations, the pressure increased, and some of our brothers mentioned above were forced to sign confessions under threats of rape of their wives and arrest of their children.

The 23 young men currently on trial in Tashkent have all been in prison for more than twenty years and have not returned to their families for a long time. They are the brave men of our time who wanted to follow our Deen fully, did not remain silent in the face of oppression, and were then accused because of their thoughts and beliefs, enduring nearly a quarter of a century of inhumane suffering in detention. It should be noted that these Shabab have no connection with terrorism. The charges against them now are no different from those brought against them in 1999. None of them have anything to do with the crimes stipulated in Articles 159 and 244 of the National Penal Code; they did not hinder the activities of constitutional authorities nor attempt to overthrow the constitutional system by force. They believe that all the peoples of the world, including the people of Uzbekistan, will only achieve happiness and prosperity if they live according to the system revealed by Allah Almighty. Such a belief and conviction does not mean an attempt to violently overthrow or physically disrupt the constitutional order! As for the terrorist act that occurred in Tashkent on February 16, 1999, it is another issue entirely, and the political Hizb ut Tahrir has

nothing to do with such actions. Hizb ut Tahrir is a global political party, and its method to achieve its aim follows only intellectual struggle and political struggle.

And now, if we return to the accusations of the Uzbek regime against the Shabab, none of these accusations were proven in the investigations. The charge of "overthrowing the constitutional system..." is merely a fabrication, as it was during the previous regime. To prove this, it is enough to look at the ideological programs and intellectual and political books of Hizb ut Tahrir, as well as the statements made by the Shabab during the investigations. Unfortunately, the government has not conducted such impartial investigations for a quarter of a century, and it seems unlikely that it will do so in the future. Therefore, it can be said that the current authorities today are fighting against those who believe in living by the Islamic system, following in the footsteps of ignorant rulers in history. The wide-open door to immorality today, spreading like a plague in Muslim countries, is clear evidence of this truth for any sensible person. Additionally, the various forms of fighting against the virtues and good deeds commanded by our Deen are evidence that the government ruling us is also on this side.

What sense does it make for the president to release these young men who are steadfast in their ideas from prisons after the end of their sentence, and after years return them to prison because of those ideas and opinions?! These Shabab are merely advocates of good (*khair*) for our people and our land, not destroyers at all. It should be noted that the actions of the Uzbek regime today are being watched and discussed by Muslims all over the world...

We in Hizb ut-Tahrir, the political party, call on the government of Uzbekistan to refrain from repeating such atrocities. We once again warn against committing new massacres similar to those that occurred under the Karimov regime in 1999. These crimes will lead to the government's being marked with the ugliest stain in the pages of history. Stop oppressing the righteous people of Uzbekistan! Release the detainees! Stop attacking and torturing the good and righteous people in our country! Do not send back to prison those pure and pious individuals whom you have tortured and imprisoned for more than twenty years of their lives!

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Hizb ut Tahrir
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