

A Great Difference Between the Istanbul Declaration and the Previous Fatwas!

(Translated)

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At the conclusion of their conference, which they called “Gaza is an Islamic and Humanitarian Responsibility” held in Istanbul for six days the ulema, hosted by Erdogan, issued a final declaration. They commenced with Quranic verses about preparation and Jihad in the Path of Allah (swt), so that anyone reading it might assume that what would follow would be a practical program on how to engage immediately in a Jihad that not only relieves Gaza but also liberates Palestine and al-Masjid al-Aqsa. However, the reality was the opposite. The decisions, recommendations, and calls issued came as though written in the language of the international order, conforming to international law, echoing the discourse of regimes loyal to America and the West. It can only be described as a desperate attempt to whitewash the disgrace of the rulers, foremost among them Erdogan, after their failure and collusion in aiding Gaza, and after their efforts to lock down the Ummah by every means from fulfilling its duty.

We do not slander these ulema when we say that we cannot tell which is more dangerous: what the Istanbul Declaration contained, or what it omitted! To clarify this, and by way of comparison, we present here a simple contrast between the Istanbul Declaration and the fatwas that preceded it specifically since the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation, over the past two years. We shall refer to them as the “previous fatwas” fatwas issued by recognized bodies and ulema, with dates and documentation, publicly published and verifiable. This is a fair comparison. On the one hand, the Istanbul Declaration signed by ulema, and on the other, the previous fatwas issued by ulema as well but leading to entirely different stances and actions.

As for the previous fatwas whether issued by the ulema themselves, or in response to calls and pleas from the people of Gaza and its mujahideen, who appealed to the Ummah, its armies, and its ulema to join the battle of the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation as a battle of total liberation, they were founded on the Book of Allah (swt) and the Sunnah of His Messenger (saw). They stipulated the Shariah obligation of mobilizing the armies in Jihad for the Sake of Allah (swt) to fully liberate Palestine. They declared this Shariah obligation binding on the entire Ummah, with the armies having the foremost Shariah obligation, for in their hands are the weapons and power, and in their ranks are trained soldiers. These fatwas also declared it haram for soldiers to obey their commanders in refraining from the Shariah obligation. Some even ruled that rebellion against rulers was obligatory, given their proven collaboration and neglect, and their restraining the Ummah from aiding Gaza and liberating Palestine.

The fatwas stated that the rulers’ betrayal and negligence incur Allah’s anger and punishment in this world and the Hereafter, and that it severs the bonds of loyalty and disavowal. The ulema called the Ummah to break through barriers by force and engage in Jihad in the Path of Allah (swt) to aid Gaza, without waiting for permission from rulers. They affirmed that their appeals to rulers were only as a matter of leaving a proof before Allah (swt), knowing the rulers would do nothing after all their betrayal.

Moreover, those fatwas included words of truth that made the believers’ hearts tremble for example, that the Ummah and its ulema could not bear to stand before Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment as adversaries to the people of Gaza, the mujahideen, and those stationed in the battle front, and that death would be lighter on them than such a stance.

In short, the actions built upon the previous fatwas push the Ummah to break its chains, remove its rulers, reclaim control of its strength and armies, and march to fulfill its Lord's Shariah obligation until the full liberation of Palestine, despite the regimes and their agents.

The Istanbul Declaration, however, contained none of these calls. It did not call to mobilize the armies, nor to march, nor to break the chains of the Ummah from its rulers, nor even to liberate Palestine! Instead, it adopted Erdogan's calls for forming an Islamic coalition described as "humanitarian" with the stated goal of "stopping the aggression and prosecuting criminals." The declaration, which opened with mention of "international silence and regional collusion," proceeded to call for engagement with those very complicit states and international actors, urging pressure on them to take positions. It called for a global coalition of rights groups and parliaments, appealed to Christian institutions led by the Pope, and even to Jewish institutions to "save Gaza"! It called to activate decisions of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, rather than applying the Shariah Law of Allah (swt) and His Shariah rulings regarding those who fight Muslims and occupy their land.

As for the Muslims themselves, the Istanbul Declaration restricted their duty to donating funds and allocating half of next year's Zakat to aid Gaza, and rebuild it after the war instead of calling for the declaration of a war of liberation. When addressing the siege, it limited its call to "available means," including supporting "freedom flotillas" of civilian ships, rather than calling to send military fleets and armies.

The declaration also equated Islamic Shariah Law with international law as a reference point, when calling for cutting ties with the Jewish entity, rather than calling for uprooting the malignant tumor altogether. It affirmed the sanctity of the idol of nationalism by assigning responsibility to confront the plans of "Greater Israel" exclusively to the "targeted states."

It ended by bearing false witness before all people, expressing thanks and gratitude to Erdogan, describing his government as "wise."

This brief review shows the actions that can be built upon the Istanbul Declaration, go no further than collecting donations and appealing to the enemies to stop the war. Worse still, the declaration absolves rulers and regimes of their crime of betrayal and negligence, and leaves implementation of its calls to those very rulers, despite the glaring reality of their conspiracy and complicity.

It would have been fitting for the "Ulema of Istanbul," under the International Union of Muslim Ulema and the Islamic Ulema Endowment in Turkey, who gathered in the hundreds at Erdogan's table, to take practical stances that would mobilize the entire Ummah and its armies in immediate action, not merely to relieve Gaza and stop the war, but to liberate all of Palestine. It would have been appropriate for their stances to call for people and soldiers to leave their dunya engagements, when the media transmits their statements, so that they are ready to hear the practical directives that they will direct the Ummah towards. Then, the world would hold its breath and the kuffar tremble at the mere mention of their gathering. However, alas, they refused to be worthy of such.

Finally, the two questions that must be asked in light of the Istanbul Conference's outcomes are: Was this conference truly held to aid Gaza? Or was it held to abort any meaningful action that could have been built upon the previous fatwas?

And after the Istanbul Declaration what do you expect our vile enemy to understand from us? More killing, destruction, corpses, and displacement? Will he understand anything other than that this is the most a two-billion strong Ummah can do, or even think of doing?!