

[İsmail Saymaz's Column]

Incident Information

Date of Incident: March 27th, 2023

Location of Incident: Turkey

Identifying Information of Perpetrator: İsmail Saymaz, Journalist,

Source: <https://halktv.com.tr/makale/imamogluna-ceza-veren-hakimin-kardesi-fetocu-cikti-726966>

Hate Speech Analysis

Transcription of hate speech statement: "Whoever bends and twists the law and uses it as a weapon against the opposition, there is bound to be a family member or relative linked to FETÖ¹." and "[The brother of the judge] won a scholarship in 2011 and started his PhD programme at the University of Liechester in the UK. After the coup attempt, he was dismissed from his studies with the Decree Law No. 673 issued on 1 September 2016, along with 157 academics who belonged to, were affiliated with or had contacts with the FETÖ/PDY terrorist organisation, which was found to pose a threat to national security among the students subject to the Law No. 1416 on Students to be Sent to Foreign Countries."

Target group(s) of hate speech: Individuals who are alleged to be members of the Gülen movement.

Justification of hate speech: The statement attempts to link the brother of the judge who sentenced İmamoğlu to the Gülen movement by stating that he had a scholarship cut off with a decree law issued after the coup attempt, along with individuals who were allegedly affiliated with the Gülen movement.

Analysis of the hate speech statement: In his column, Saymaz uses hate speech against the alleged members of the Gülen movement by making false and defamatory statements. Firstly, he uses the term "FETÖ," which has been used as a pejorative term by the Turkish government to refer to the Gülen movement and its alleged members. This term has been widely used to spread hatred and incite violence against the Gülen movement and its followers. By using this term in his column, Saymaz perpetuates this hate speech against the alleged members of the Gülen movement.

¹ FETÖ is a derogatory term that the Turkish government coined to refer to the faith-based Gülen movement, which it deems a terrorist group responsible for a failed military coup in July 2016. Its US-based leader, Fethullah Gülen, denies any involvement in the putsch. The European Union and the United States have refused to adopt Turkey's views on the group.

Secondly, Saymaz tries to discredit the judge who sentenced İmamoğlu by linking him to the Gülen movement, which is an object of hatred in Turkey. Saymaz alleges that the judge's brother had a scholarship cut off while studying abroad with the State of Emergency Decrees as sufficient evidence for him to be a member of the alleged terrorist organization. This is a false and defamatory claim without any evidence, and it aims to create a negative image of the judge's family in the eyes of the public.

Thirdly, Saymaz claims that "whoever bends and twists the law and uses it as a weapon against the opposition, there is always a family member or relative linked to FETÖ." This is a generalization that equates anyone who opposes the government and faces a legal challenge with the alleged members of the Gülen movement. This statement is not only false and defamatory, but it also perpetuates the hate speech and stigmatization of the alleged members of the Gülen movement.

Overall, Saymaz's column is full of hate speech against the alleged members of the Gülen movement. He uses defamatory and false statements to discredit the judge and his family, perpetuate stigmatization, and spread the Turkish government's discourse of hatred towards the Gülen movement and its alleged members.

Contextual information: In Turkey, the Gülen movement is considered a terrorist organisation by the government, and individuals who are allegedly associated with the movement have faced persecution, including dismissal from their jobs, imprisonment, and travel bans. It is true that both the ruling party and its opponents in Turkey have been accused of using similar tactics to discredit each other. In this particular incident, Saymaz's column contains hate speech and false information that stigmatizes and discredits the Gülen movement and its alleged members.

Impact of the statement: The statement by İsmail Saymaz can further perpetuate hate speech against individuals who are allegedly associated with the Gülen movement and contribute to their stigmatization and discrimination. It can also undermine the credibility of individuals who may have been dismissed from their studies or jobs due to their alleged affiliation with the Gülen movement.

Conclusion

The statement made by İsmail Saymaz linking an individual's scholarship being cut off due to the State of Emergency Decrees to membership in an alleged terrorist organisation perpetuates hate speech against individuals who are allegedly associated with the Gülen movement. It is important to call out and condemn such statements and demand corrective action to prevent the stigmatization and discrimination of individuals who are allegedly associated with the Gülen movement. Such language and claims have no place in responsible journalism and violate basic principles of ethics and human rights. It is important to recognize

that criticism of the government and its policies is essential for a healthy democracy, but it must be based on factual information and respect for human dignity and diversity.