

Press Release

Media Freedom under Democracy Seems More Dangerous than the One under Dictatorship!

On 10 May 2023, certain news platforms, including print and television, reported detentions of up to 16 Muslims in two cities – Bhopal and Hyderabad. The scandalous allegations attacked Hizb ut Tahrir as a ‘terrorist’ organization intending to wage ‘Jihad’ against India. References were made to ‘unknown’ sources from different intelligence agencies (state and union) including some ‘foreign’ agencies. Possession of books and printed material of Hizb ut Tahrir by those detained was made the basis for the allegations. Since then different versions of the allegations have been doing their rounds online, including some linking the 16 Muslims arrested to an ongoing case of Hizb ut Tahrir members in the state of Tamil Nadu. Even eminent news platforms such as India Today or Economic Times of India could not adhere to a simple code-of-conduct, that they brazenly publish on their websites, and conveniently towed the ‘narrative’ given to them without running a basic fact check about Hizb ut Tahrir! Have they done so they would have found that Hizb ut Tahrir (Party of Liberation) is a political party that works to re-establish the *Khilafah* (Caliphate) – Islamic ruling system - upon the method of the Prophethood, in the Muslim world through an intellectual and political struggle and it does not adopt armed action, emulating the example of Prophet (saw) and his method in establishing the first Islamic state.

After the collapse of USSR, America forged a new imaginary enemy of the Muslim world, so as to keep its own public on the side of those running the American government. This created a scene of global media narratives that depict criminal acts as "Islamic terrorism", while most of them are operations planned by America and its allies. Since the brutal war against Islam that America waged unilaterally since 2001, these narratives have been exported and embraced by its covetous partners and puppet rulers. And thus, from the “Greatest Democracy” to the “Largest Democracy”, there is an abundance in America and India of complicit media that hide the truth and propagate lies, especially when it comes to reporting news on Muslims and Islam.

For the desire for prestige in the media market, the complex of pleasing those in power, and the craving for rewards from the wealthy, all of these ills constitute a guarantee that “benefit” becomes the standard for action among media personalities, instead of lofty values and the pursuit of truth.

Media Freedom is coveted and advocated in democracy as among the primary institutions of accounting other institutions within the state. It is considered one of the principle standards with which Western institutions measure the “health and well-being” of other nations.

So what is to be said about eminent media institutions, in India – the largest democracy, failing to adhere to code-of-conduct published on their own websites!? Codes of conduct

such as running a simple fact-check or being balanced by presenting counter opinions or not to mislead people or lie.

Too often one can see media references such as 'reliable source' or 'non-disclosed source' when referring to people in government as source. Such people who can seldom be made accountable before law for planting a lie in the public sphere.

What is to be made of a media that espouses to protect 'freedom of expression', while it blocks emails without being bothered to know 'the other viewpoint'?

What can be said about media outlets that have been crippled by censorship that prevents them from accessing websites, from the government that is trying to hold them accountable?

What is to be made of the "Press Council of India", who have failed to imbibe the value of "not lying" in its members, and who have prescribed code-of-conduct that are repeatedly made redundant by its council members?!

What is to be said of a media, in the largest democracy, that has failed to account its government who treat possession of "Books & Leaflets" as possession of "Weapons & Arms" to be punished under the draconian UAPA laws?!

Advocating lies in a manner misleading or deliberately covering up "The Truth", as witnessed in democracies, is more dangerous than silence about "The Truth", as it is in dictatorships.

As is well known, in order to cover up a lie, other lies must be invented. Therefore, in democracies, and with the existence of the so-called multiplicity of institutions as an alleged mechanism to control and prevent the monopoly of powers, it has become a duty to fabricate lies sufficient for all these institutions to cover up one lie, and this is what corrupts and misleads the public.

Islam places a lofty value on the one who accounts the ruler for the sake of the Truth. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «سَيِّدُ الشُّهَدَاءِ حَمْزَةُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، وَرَجُلٌ قَامَ إِلَى إِمَامٍ جَائِرٍ فَأَمَرَهُ وَنَهَاهُ، فَقَتَلَهُ» ***"The Master of Martyrs is Hamza bin Abdul Muttalib and the one who says a word of Truth to an unjust ruler and be killed."***

Thus, to those responsible for conveying the news to the public and still hold the value of telling "The Truth", just make a simple query on any of the internet information platforms such as ChatGPT, Wikipedia, Google, etc. and you will get a primary explanation about Hizb ut Tahrir that should erase all the lies that have been fabricated.

As for the media outlets who have shamefully decided to forget about their mission of conveying "The Truth" we remind them of their pledge to the profession using the words of the Prophet Mohammad (saw), «أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِأَكْبَرِ الْكِبَائِرِ؟» ***"Shall I not inform you of the greatest of major sins?"*** They said, "Certainly, O Messenger of Allah." He said, «الإِشْرَاقُ بِاللَّهِ» ***"Associating partners with Allah, disobedience to parents."*** And he was reclining, so he sat up and said, «أَلَا وَقَوْلُ الزُّورِ» ***"And false speech and false testimony."*** and he kept repeating it until he became silent.

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