

Political Demonstrations & Protests¹

Question: Are political demonstrations organized and carried out by men or women against rulers and governments considered legitimate ways of correcting people? If someone dies during such protests, is he then considered a martyr?

Answer: I do not believe political demonstrations, neither by men nor women, are considered a remedy (to influence the leaders). Rather, I see them as ways leading to more tribulations and evils. They bring about oppression of people and violations of their rights. However, the Islamically-legislated ways are things such as writing, sincere advising, calling to that which is good by safe means – the means used by the people of knowledge, the companions of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), and those who afterwards followed them in righteousness. Some legitimate means would be by writing (to the leaders and rulers), personally speaking with them, calling them, or advising them. No one should publicly slander them upon the pulpits (during lectures in the mosques) and other places saying, “They do this and that!” and “All this evil is because of them!” And from Allāh we seek help.²

Ibn Bāz, may Allāh have mercy on him, also said:

These and other violent means are some of the most dangerous ways people oppose the truth. They result in chaos, oppression, enmity, and beatings. Similar to this is what some people carry out of political demonstrations which also cause great harm to those calling to the truth. They stage marches in the streets, screaming and shouting, all of which has

¹ This fatwā was taken from a book called “Al-Fatāwā Ash-Shar’iyyah fī Al-Qadhāyā Al-‘Asriyyah,” a collection of various rulings by Muhammad Ibn Fahd Al-Husayn.

² Taken from the cassette: Fatāwā al-‘Ulamā’ fī Ṭā`ah Wulāt al-Amr.

nothing to do with the correct way to reform, rectify, and call to that which is good. The correct way is by visiting and writing in a noble and respectful way.³

³ Taken from the magazine: al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyyah (38/210).