

Obeying Governments & Authorities¹

Question: Some people – may Allāh guide them – do not believe the pledge of obedience and allegiance to the governments to be an obligation in these countries. What's your advice regarding this?

Answer: We advise everyone to listen to and obey them as we've previously and always said. We warn against rebelling and revolting against any of the leaders in authority; these are some of the greatest sins. Rather, they are from the religion of the Khawārij. This is the religion of the Khawārij and Mu'tazilah; they reject the command to listen to and obey the leaders if they see them commit a sin, eventually opposing and rising up against them. This is wrong and contradictory to what the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) commanded. He ordered that one must listen to and obey the leaders in the good they command. He said:

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْ أَمِيرِهِ شَيْئًا مِنْ مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ فَلْيَكْرَهُ مَا يَأْتِي مِنْ مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ وَلَا
يَنْزِعَنَّ يَدًا مِنْ طَاعَةٍ

“Whoever sees from his leader something of disobedience to Allāh, then he should dislike what he does of sinning against Allāh, but he must not remove even a hand-span away from obedience (to him).”²

And he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

مَنْ أَتَاكُمْ وَأَمْرُكُمْ جَمِيعٌ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَشُقَّ عَصَاكُمْ وَيَفْرِقَ جَمَاعَتَكُمْ فَاصْرَبُوا عَنْقَهُ

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 Recorded by Muslim (no. 1855) from the ḥadīth of 'Awf Ibn Mālik al-Ashja'ī (رضي الله عنه).

“Whoever comes to you while you are all in a state of unity and he seeks to cause rebellion and tries to divide you, then (the legitimate ruler could) execute him.”³

So, it is not permissible for an individual to revolt against or leave the allegiance and obedience to his legitimate leader (government, president, king, etc). Neither is it permissible to promote such concepts because these acts are some of the greatest evils and foremost means leading to tribulations and enmity among people. As for the one who calls to that, this is the religion of the Khawārij. Such a person deserves capital punishment because he disunites the people and thereby plants the beginnings of a revolution. It is an obligation to warn with the utmost effort against this. It is also an obligation upon the leader of affairs that if he comes to know of someone promoting this ideology, he must forcefully apprehend him in order to prevent further calamities among the Muslims.⁴

³ Recorded by Muslim (no. 1852) from the ḥadīth of ‘Arfajah Ibn Shurayḥ (رضي الله عنه). Also, like many other legislations in the Quran and Sunnah, this is a conditional, legitimate capital punishment verdict to be determined and carried out by legitimate leaderships or governments, not unconditionally by individuals.

⁴ Taken from the cassette: Aḥdāf al-Ḥamalāt al-‘Ilāmiyyah ʿĪd Wulāh wa ‘Ulamā’ Bilād al-Ḥaramayn.