

Press Release

Arrest of Sheikh Mahmoud Velitov Imam of Yardam Mosque in Moscow (Translated)

Russian media broadcasted on July ١٢, a news story about the arrest of the Imam of Moscow's Yardam Mosque, Sheikh Mahmoud Velitov based on the Russian Bureau of Investigation. The Sheikh was charged according to Article ٢٠٥.٢ of the Russian Federation Constitution with publicly supporting terrorism, punishable by imprisonment from ٢-٥ years, and the Sheikh was referred to house arrest.

According to investigators, in September ٢٠١٣ Velitov, while being a council head and imam of a religious organization, delivered a public speech during prayers at the mosque on Khachaturyan Street in which he justified the activity of a member of the terrorist Hizb ut Tahrir (al-Islami).

This is what appeared in the media, that the speech of Velitov was about Gabayev Abdullah, a member of Hizb ut Tahrir, who was killed in Kslar, and he justified his work. However, arresting Sheikh Mahmoud for justifying Abdullah Gabayev's acts indicates irrationality of the charges against him, particularly since Abdullah, who was shot killed in ٢٠١٣, was not known as a member of Hizb ut Tahrir, but the party in Russia announced that after his death.

Gabayev, Rahimahullah, was not killed during an exchange of fire with the security forces, but was cowardly killed in front of his house, and he was never sued for being a member of Hizb ut Tahrir. Nor is there any evidence of his involvement in any terrorist act. Therefore, Velitov giving a speech in which he consoles the betrayed member of Hizb ut Tahrir Abdullah Gabayev cannot be and is not in any way a support for terrorism, even though Russia considers the party's activity terrorism.

Therefore, before the journalists transmit the irrational security forces allegations, they should first reflect on the fact of the arrest of Imam Velitov. And then they will realize the non-conformity of the charges against him with the reality, especially since his arrest has been magnified and came against the backdrop of rearranging the budget of the security forces. And since he is one of the most influential imams in Russia, accusing him of justifying terrorism is in order to increase the spending on their security services. As for why Velitov was selected in particular, it is because he spoke about the problems of the Islamic Ummah as being the problem of every believer, especially the silent imams and muftis.

Al-Haq (swt) said:

﴿لَا يَأْلُوْنَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُّوْا مَا عَنِتُّمْ قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُوْرُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ﴾

“They would spare no pains to ruin you; they love to hamper you. Hatred is revealed by (the utterance of) their mouths, but that which their breasts hide is greater. We have made plain for you the revelations if you will understand.” [Al-i-Imran: ١١٨]

**Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir
in Russia**