



ERDOĞAN'S LONG ARM: THE CASE OF **SENEGAL**

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About Stockholm Center for Freedom

Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF) is an advocacy organization that promotes the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights and freedoms with a special focus on Turkey, a nation of 80 million that is facing significant backsliding in its parliamentary democracy under its autocratic leaders.

SCF, a non-profit organization, was set up by a group of journalists who have been forced to live in self-exile in Sweden against the backdrop of a massive crackdown on press freedom in Turkey.

SCF is committed to serving as a reference source by providing a broader picture of rights violations in Turkey, monitoring daily developments on fact-based investigative journalism and documenting individual cases of the infringement of fundamental rights. The founders of SCF are top-notch journalists who had managed national dailies in Turkey and worked for leading media outlets before they were forced to leave. They have the expertise, human resources and network on the ground to track events in Turkey despite serious challenges.

ERDOĞAN'S LONG ARM: THE CASE OF SENEGAL

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....6

ERDOĞAN: MEMBERS OF THE GÜLEN MOVEMENT HAVE
NO RIGHT TO LIFE.....8

OPEN THREATS TO TURKS IN EXILE BY THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT.....10

TURKISH GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDISTS AMPLIFY THREATS.....11

WITCH-HUNT AGAINST THE GÜLEN MOVEMENT12

BACKGROUND ON EDUCATION IN SENEGAL....14

THE GÜLEN MOVEMENT'S CONTRIBUTIONS.....15

CRACKDOWN ON GÜLEN MOVEMENT SCHOOLS
THE ONSET16

FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS BOARD (DEİK)17

TURKEY'S MAARIF FOUNDATION (TMV)19

TURKEY'S MAARIF FOUNDATION (TMV)19

HANDOVER DECISION FOR THE SCHOOLS ON DECEMBER 7, 2016.....19

DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE DECISION21

THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION APPEALS TO THE COURT21

JOINT VENTURE WITH A FRENCH COMPANY22

ERDOĞAN'S PRESSURE PAYS OFF.....22

THE CLOSURE DECISION FOR THE SCHOOLS23

POLICE SURROUND BOSPHORE COLLEGE23

PARENTS TAKE TWO SCHOOL OFFICIALS HOSTAGE.....24

FINANCIAL AID FROM THE ERDOĞAN GOVERNMENT25

CONTENTS

SUSPICIOUS INCIDENTS 'EXTRA PERSONNEL' AT THE EMBASSY	....26
INCREASING INCIDENTS OF THEFT	.....27
PLIGHT OF THE EDUCATORS THE EXODUS	.....28
ARRESTS IN TURKEY	.....28
INVESTIGATIONS AND DETENTION WARRANTS	....29
SOYLU: THEY WALK AROUND FREELY HERE	.....29
PRESSURE ON FAMILY MEMBERS IN TURKEY	....29
G. MURAT KARADAĞ'S BROTHER IS ARRESTED	....30
THREATS TO LOKMAN NURÇIN'S FAMILY	.....31
TARGET LIST DELIVERED TO SENEGALESE GOVERNMENT	.....33
TEACHERS' VISA APPLICATIONS WERE MOSTLY REJECTED	...34
PASSPORT HURDLES	....35
CHILDREN WHO WENT TURKEY WERE UNABLE TO RETURN	....35
THE TRAGEDY OF THE AKEL FAMILY	....35
THE BÜLBÜL FAMILY FLEW WITHOUT PASSPORTS	....36
NO PASSPORT FOR BABY TEKKILIÇ	.....36
ŞAHİN FAMILY FLED TO EUROPE	....37
CURRENT SITUATION	.....37
CONCLUSION	....39
RECOMMENDATIONS	....41

ERDOĞAN'S LONG ARM: THE CASE OF SENEGAL

INTRODUCTION

Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) government, rooted in political Islam and led by authoritarian President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has escalated its witch-hunt to persecute critics abroad through government institutions as well as by using NGOs and other entities as fronts. As a result, rights violations including abductions, physical attacks, profiling, discrimination, threats and hate crimes have gone far beyond Turkey's borders and have become a problem in intergovernmental affairs as the Turkish government has been found to be violating international treaties, interfering in other countries' affairs and violating their laws.

In this report, which takes Senegal as a case study, SCF reveals methods employed by the Turkish government in harassing, intimidating, threatening and profiling critics and opponents in the West African country. At least since 2010 and more intensely after corruption scandals in 2013 that incriminated Erdoğan's family members, and even more so following a failed coup in 2016, Erdoğan and his government have been cracking down on the Fethullah Gülen-led Hizmet movement at home and abroad, including in Senegal. Blaming the faith-based civic group for the coup conspiracy, the crucial details of which are still unknown, the Turkish government has labeled hundreds of thousands of citizens from all walks of life as terrorists and shut down their businesses and NGOs based merely on their perceived affiliation with the Gülen movement. Due to the Erdoğan government's tight control over the judiciary and abusive practices under the state of emergency, the scope and intensity of the collective punishment has reached unprecedented levels in the last few years, affecting more than 500,000 people.

The entire government apparatus and Turkish missions abroad have been engaged in systematic efforts against the Gülen movement in more than 150 nations including Senegal. Turkish intelligence uses Turkish embassies and consulates as a cover and a hub for activities such as profiling, harassment, denial of consular services, confiscation of passports, threats, kidnapping, boycotts, insults, slander and unlawful information gathering and spying on regime critics. Many Turkish citizens, NGOs and media organizations have also enthusiastically joined the government in one of the largest and most brutal purges of the 21st century, which is occurring on a global scale due to the transnational nature of the Gülen movement.



Armed police laid a siege around Bosphore College on October 3, 2017, blocked the entry and halted the education.

Ankara urges its foreign counterparts to designate the Gülen movement, a civic group inspired by US-based Turkish Muslim cleric Fethullah Gülen that is focused on science education, volunteerism, community involvement and interfaith and intercultural dialogue, as a “terrorist organization.” They demand the deportation or extradition of not only Gülen movement leaders but also businesspeople, educators, journalists and ordinary citizens who have ties to the group or are sympathizers of it. Businesses and NGOs established by the Gülen movement abroad are forced to shut down or be handed over to agents of the Turkish government such as the Maarif Foundation.

As in many other countries, Hizmet sympathizers in Senegal have been heavily involved in the area of education, which has made their schools and personnel a primary target of the Turkish government. Despite the long-time contributions of the Gülen movement to education in Senegal, Erdogan’s autocratic regime convinced the host government to shut down schools affiliated with the group thanks to intense diplomacy and financial aid. Having lost their work and residence permits and confronted with risks such as abduction by Turkish intelligence or deportation to Turkey, all personnel had to leave Senegal to seek refuge in safe countries. The Turkish Embassy systematically created hurdles, such as denying them passports, for the victims and their families. Most of those who went to Turkey have been subject to legal action.

Although critics from all segments of Turkish society including Kurds and Alevis are being targeted in general for stigmatization by the Turkish government, participants of the Gülen movement have borne the brunt of this unprecedented witch-hunt in Turkey and abroad. Turkish embassies and government agencies including intelligence services and nongovernmental organizations affiliated with the AKP government are all involved in the profiling

and harassment of Gülen movement participants.

In pursuit of his critics, Erdoğan and his associates in the government have unfortunately instrumentalized embassies and consulates, representation offices of public institutions and state funded and/or controlled organizations and foundations that are disguised as nongovernmental organizations or independent groups. The government bodies that engage in profiling and witch-hunt activities include the National Intelligence Organization (MİT), the Overseas Turks and Kin Communities Agency (YTB), the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA), the Religious Affairs Directorate (Diyanet), the Anadolu news agency (AA), the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), the Yunus Emre Institute and the Maarif (Education) Foundation.

A second group consists of parallel structures supported, funded or organized by entities attached to the Turkish government or the office of President Erdoğan. Organizations such as the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD) in Europe, and the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) and the Turkish Heritage Organization in the US, among others, can be found in this group. In Africa, Erdogan uses some front charity groups such as International Humanitarian Aid (IHH). In addition to their main areas of activity, these organizations perform such functions as advocating for the ruling party abroad, consolidating support for the AKP among Turkish expatriates and Muslim immigrant groups and occasionally working as an intelligence service to profile and collect information about Turkish dissidents or critics in their respective countries.

Erdoğan: Members of the Gülen Movement Have No Right to Life

The Turkish president made scandalous remarks in September 2016 when he said that “no country or region around the world will ever be a safe haven for FETÖ [an acronym for the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization, as the government describes the Gülen movement] and its militants.” Erdoğan has persistently voiced threats against those who have been forced to leave the country due to persecution, and at public rallies broadcast live and attended by tens of thousands of his diehard fans he has vowed to hunt down Gülen movement participants and kill them.

In a speech delivered at his palace on October 19, 2017 he said: “We will never leave alone those who fled abroad; we will chase them until they are punished like they deserve. Those who betrayed Turkey and the Turkish nation will not be comfortable for the rest of their lives whether in Turkey or abroad.”

In another speech Erdoğan said: “They are the elements of dissension within us, like cancer cells. A comprehensive cleanup is required so that not the slightest trace of them is left behind. And that’s what we are doing right now. ... Those who fled abroad should never feel

Turkish
President
Erdoğan
hosted
Senegal
president
Macky Sall
in his palace
in Ankara on
May 22, 2016.



safe. ... We are currently working on a new initiative. We are calling on those who went [abroad] to return. A deadline will be given to them. If they don't return, we will do whatever is needed. Indeed, the children of this country should return and tell whatever they know to the relevant authorities. If they don't, they'll pay for it. At any rate, we won't support them as our citizens. ... We will take due action when they are apprehended."

At a joint press conference with President Hashim Thaçi of Kosovo in Ankara on December 29, 2016, Erdoğan said: "Our crackdown on them both at home and abroad is under way and will continue in the future. Wherever they flee, we will be hot on the heels of the heads and militants of terrorist organizations."

Speaking at a rally in the Black Sea province of Zonguldak on April 4, 2017, Erdoğan said: "We are purging every Gülenist in the army, in the police and in state institutions. And we will continue cleansing [these organizations of] them because we will eradicate this cancer from the body of this country and state. They will not enjoy the right to life. ... Our fight against them will continue until the end. We won't leave them merely wounded."

These quotes are only a small part of what Erdoğan has long been voicing in his campaign of fear that vilifies opponents and critics. This has led to physical attacks on the lives and properties of critics abroad, calls for boycotts of their businesses, death threats and punishment of their relatives back in Turkey. He uses every opportunity to exert pressure on ambassadors and employs similar propaganda with the heads of state or government he meets.

Open Threats to Turks in Exile by the Turkish Government



Erdoğan's provocative statements signaling his intent to assassinate his critics, especially Hizmet participants in foreign countries, were also confirmed by similar remarks from other government officials as well as by Erdoğan loyalists and propagandists in the pro-government media. For example, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said on April 4, 2017: "We will not stop chasing them [Gülen movement participants] at home or abroad. We are breathing down their necks. We won't give these traitors and dishonorable people room to breathe. We'll hold them to account."

In a public speech delivered on March 8, 2017, Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu revealed that the government was plotting to do something abroad to critics from the Gülen movement: "They think they can go and flee to Germany. ... One day, these FETÖ terrorists may be shocked to see where they are located, you know. I'm telling you from here, it is not that easy. ... Both the security and the strategy of this country [Turkey] have now changed. We won't leave those who betrayed Turkey alone wherever they may be around the world."

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu

This statement suggested that the Turkish government was planning to use mafia-style, clandestine operations to target Gülen movement participants in foreign countries.

The Wall Street Journal has exposed how in September 2016 Turkish government officials discussed with retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn the rendition from the United States of Turkish Islamic cleric Fethullah Gülen and his extrajudicial return to Turkey while Flynn was serving as an advisor to the Trump presidential campaign. (Flynn has since been ousted as national security advisor of the administration.) Details of the discussion in New York were learned from James Woolsey, former director of the CIA, who was in attendance, and from others who were briefed on the meeting. Also present at the meeting were Berat Albayrak, energy minister of Turkey and President Erdoğan's son-in-law, and Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, according to foreign lobbying disclosure documents filed by Flynn with the Justice Department in March 2017.

Woolsey arrived at the meeting on September 19 in the middle of discussions about the cleric and found the topic "startling and the actions being discussed possibly illegal," he told the WSJ, adding that the idea was "a covert step in the dead of night to whisk this guy away." Woolsey said specific tactics for removing Gülen were not discussed, but if they had

been, he “would have spoken up and questioned their legality.”

Special Counsel Robert Mueller is reportedly investigating an alleged plan that Michael Flynn discussed with Turkish representatives to forcibly remove Gülen. According to an article that appeared in The Wall Street Journal and was sourced with “people with knowledge of discussions” between Flynn and the Turkish representatives, Flynn and his son, Michael Flynn Jr., were to be paid as much as \$15 million to deliver Gülen to the Turkish government.

If Turkey dares to plan abductions even from the US, it can also plan similar kidnappings and assassinations in other countries including those in Europe.

Energy Minister Albayrak made the following scandalous remarks to Turks living abroad: “How can you stand it? If I were you, I would have strangled them [members of the Gülen movement]” and “This group of traitors is all over the world now. In order to defame this country, nation and religion, in order to betray, they spread their poison and betrayal abroad every day by means of their disgusting diaspora network. You must see them in the countries you are going to. If I were you I would not have been able to restrain myself, I would have strangled them wherever I saw them. ... These fugitives, stateless traitors, live very normal lives,” he added.

İbrahim Kalın, spokesperson for the presidency, admitted that intelligence agency MİT has been pursuing participants of the Gülen movement who sought asylum in other countries. “In general, MİT is in contact with various countries about people who are abroad as fugitives and have requested asylum. We demand that they be captured and extradited to Turkey,” Kalın stated at a press conference on August 17, 2017.

Turkish Government Propagandists Amplify Threats

Picking up on Turkish officials’ threatening remarks, Erdoğan’s propagandists in the pro-government media openly entertain unlawful acts such as murders and abductions without any repercussions or criminal liability. For example, after Russian Ambassador Andrei Karlov was brazenly assassinated in Ankara on December 19, 2016 by a policeman apparently affiliated with the al-Nusra Front, staunchly pro-Erdoğan journalist Cem Küçük said Turkey’s agenda was now to kill “FETÖ” militants abroad. “Destroy some three or five of them and see what happens. Shoot them in the head and see how scared they are. Kill Ekrem Dumanlı and Emre Uslu... Abdullah Bozkurt is living in Stockholm and his home address is known,” Küçük said, speaking on TV station TGRT.

Ersoy Dede, another AKP spin doctor, referred to the 1980s, when Turkey’s “deep state” assassinated ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia) militants

abroad. “I saw how this company finished off ASALA. I saw how [Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) leader Abdullah] Öcalan was kicked to the curb,” he said during a live broadcast with another pro-AKP journalist, Hikmet Genç, on Kanal 24 on August 10, 2016 while talking about Hizmet-affiliated people who were forced to flee abroad.

In the program they talked about exiled Turkish journalists Tuncay Opçin. Emre Uslu and Ekrem Dumanlı, who all now live in the US. “One day, we will wake up to meet the scoundrels who were caught with fake passports in the international arrivals terminal of Sabiha Gökçen Airport in Istanbul as they try to enter Turkey. The news bulletins will report it as ‘Tuncay Opçin, Ekrem Dumanlı, etc., were caught as they tried to enter the country with fake passports in order to say goodbye to their families.’ This will be Opçin and Dumanlı’s reaction: ‘Where are we now? What is this place? How come we ended up here?’ ... Do you get what I’m trying to say?” Then, his discussion partner, Genç, said, “If you explain this by citing ASALA, I will listen to it from a different perspective...” Later, Dede said the Gülen movement could be finished off similar to how the Turkish Republic finished off ASALA. “That is, they should not sleep soundly. Tuncay should not sleep safe and sound in his bed tonight,” he said. Genç added: “Emre Uslu should not sleep soundly. This is my call to them. Tuncay Opçin should not sleep safe and sound. Ekrem Dumanlı should not think he has fled and gotten away.”

Doğu Perinçek, leader of the neo-nationalist Vatan (Homeland) Party, which is an ally of Erdoğan, said the members of the Gülen movement must be wiped out even if they are not criminals or were not involved with the failed coup. He went even further by saying that the purge should include anybody who is associated with the group or shares the same goals or is aligned ideologically with them. Sabahattin Önkibar, a member of the Vatan Party and writer for the neo-nationalist *Aydınlık* newspaper, stated that people close to the movement should all be destroyed. Önkibar claimed that Ottoman Sultan Fatih Sultan Mehmet burnt alive thousands of people from the Hurufi community, considered to be heretical to Islam, to save the empire. “If he had not burned the Hurufi people alive with no questions asked, the Sublime State [Ottoman Empire] would have ended. Disappeared.” He added: “Now you will ask me if should we burn Fethullahists like this? No, I wouldn’t say that, but something should be done to them. The prisons don’t do enough.”

Witch-Hunt Against the Gülen Movement

Turkey’s ruling AKP government started targeting the Gülen movement when AKP Chairman and then-Prime Minister Erdoğan was incriminated in the nation’s largest corruption investigation, revealed in December 2013. The scandal led to the resignation of four Cabinet ministers, but Erdoğan managed to hush the probe up after sacking members of the judiciary and law enforcement who exposed his graft network. He immediately blamed the investigation on the movement as part of efforts to shift the blame and avoid accountability. He branded the probe as tantamount to a coup and launched a witch-hunt against Gülen movement members.

Things went from bad to worse in the aftermath of the July 15, 2016 failed coup, which Erdoğan again accused the movement of staging with no evidence presented to support his claim. He described the military attempt as a “major blessing from God” and intensified the crackdown and purge he had launched two years earlier. “Thank God with this coup attempt we now have the ability and opportunity to do things that we would not have been able to do in normal times,” Erdoğan was quoted as saying. A year later Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım admitted accusing the movement at the time without any evidence. “I made up my mind on my own. I consulted and talked to our president, and we agreed that it was an insurrection by FETÖ members in the military. ... At the time, it could have been right or wrong.”

According to Ministry of Justice statistics at the time of writing, legal action has been initiated against 169,013 people in total, mostly in the form of detention. Some 50,100 of them have been formally arrested pending trial. Among those imprisoned are thousands of teachers, academics, businesspeople, journalists, doctors, civil society workers, lawyers and human rights defenders. More than 17,000 of them are women. Moreover, detention warrants are outstanding for 8,087 people who remain at large in Turkey or have fled abroad.

The Erdoğan government has continued to rule Turkey under new powers that made measures under the state of emergency permanent even after it was lifted. The new executive powers used by Erdogan have effectively sidelined the Turkish Parliament in passing legislation.

According to data provided by Minister Numan Kurtulmuş on July 17, 2017, 111,240 civil servants had been dismissed to date under these decree-laws without any administrative or judicial investigation. Kurtulmuş also said 966 companies in 43 cities had been seized. A report issued by the main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) confirmed these data. According to the report, the teaching licenses of 33,000 teachers from the public sector and 21,000 from the private sector were cancelled. A total of 11,301 teachers were laid off on accusations of supporting a terrorist organization; 9,843 of these teachers were members of the Eğitim-Sen union under the Confederation of Public Sector Trade Unions (KESK). Thus, the purge was not limited to the Gülen movement and but had escalated to include other critical groups as well.

Again, according to the report written by the CHP, 6,383 academics and 1,200 university personnel have been dismissed by decree. Twenty-six of the academics returned to their jobs. Moreover, 5,295 academics became unemployed because a number of universities were shut down. A total of 1,424 educational institutions including 1,064 schools and study centers were closed down in the private sector.

In total 4,238 judges and public prosecutors were dismissed, two-thirds of them immediately after the coup attempt. Their salaries and bank accounts were frozen; their licenses were cancelled. Efkan Ala, the then-interior minister, revealed that since December 2013, 35,000



**Senegal
Energy
Minister
Aly Ngouye
Ndiaye
received
students who
won medals
in a science
competition
in the
Netherlands
and
congratulated
them.**

police officers had been fired. More than 10,000 military personnel were dismissed as well.

The witch-hunt is not limited to arrests and purges. Torture and ill treatment in detention and prisons have become widespread, systematic and deliberate to stoke further fears in Turkish society. Images and videos of torture from police stations, prisons and black sites used as unofficial detention centers were circulated after the July 15 events by official state news agency AA and pro-government social media accounts. Thousands of people fled Turkey for fear of arrest and torture, while thousands could not leave because the government had cancelled the passports of well over 100,000 people and had imposed a travel ban on scores more. Many had to resort to illegal migration routes to escape persecution in Turkey.

Background on Education in Senegal

Senegal is a former French colony in West Africa that became independent in 1960. Because of its small economy Senegal has long relied on aid from foreign countries to improve its underdeveloped education system. According to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Report (2002), around 62 percent of the population lacks basic literacy skills.¹

Child labor and poor access to education are common problems across Africa.² The Senegal

1] "Non-formal education and community development in Senegal", Michelle Kuenzi, Oxford University Press and Community Development Journal, 25 February 2005, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.858.8236&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

2] "'People treat you as if you are nothing'", The Guardian, 21 August 2007, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2007/aug/21/schoolsworldwide.schools>

government recognized that a strong education system would enhance country's economic and social development.³ Thanks to cooperation with international organizations and the private sector, Senegal made laudable progress in access between 2000 and 2015. In elementary schools, gross enrolment rates went from 67.2 percent to 84.6 percent.⁴

However, despite these attempts, the education system has not reached the desired level.⁵ Therefore, private schools had daunting missions to accomplish. Currently, a significant proportion of the education sector in Senegal is composed of private schools.⁶ The Gülen movement⁷, which has heavily invested in education in many countries around the world, has also played an important role in Senegal.

The Gülen Movement's Contributions

The Gülen movement started its education initiatives in Senegal in 1998.⁸ Under the umbrella of the Başkent Education Foundation, Le Groupe Scolaire Yavuz Selim schools achieved many successes. Before the Turkish government started to come after the Gülen movement in Senegal, movement entrepreneurs operated nine schools in the country, mostly concentrated in Dakar, including nursery schools, primary schools, secondary schools and high schools. As of 2017, around 2,600 students were studying at these schools.⁹ In the last nine years, these schools have won 70 medals at the National Science Competition of Senegal, Concours Général. They rank first among high schools in the central examination for university entrance administered by Senegal's higher education institution, the Office du Baccalauréat. Between 2011 and 2016 they won 147 citations from the Office du Baccalauréat.¹⁰

Alioune Badara Ndiaye, a senior at Yavuz Selim Bosphore College in Dakar, was awarded the first place prize by Senegalese President Macky Sall at the 2016 Concours Général

3] "Education in Senegal", World Bank Group, Global Partnership for Education, 2017, <https://www.global-partnership.org/country/senegal>

4] Ibid.

5] "The Current Education System in Senegal: A Closer Look at the Advantages and Disadvantages of Attending a Private Catholic Institution in Dakar", Erin Clasby, SIT Graduate Institute/SIT Study Abroad SIT Digital Collections, Spring 2012, http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2263&context=isp_collection

6] Ibid.

7] "What is the Gülen Movement?", <http://hizmetmovement.blogspot.se/p/what-is-gulen-movement.html> ; "Hizmet educational philosophy in the example of a Hizmet-inspired school; Hayskolen", İbrahim Kaya, Uppsala University, May 2016, <http://www.diva-portal.se/smash/get/diva2:951144/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

8] <http://www.gsyavuzselim.edu.sn/qui-sommes-nous/>

9] Ibid.

10] Based on numbers Le Groupe Scolaire Yavuz Selim's managers provided to SCF.

national science competition.¹¹ Sall complimented disabled student Ndiaye at the awards ceremony on July 28, 2016. He assumed the student's prosthesis expenses and awarded him a 20 million CFA franc scholarship to cover his education at a university in France and his flights.¹²

According to the Yavuz Selim administration, the school has won four gold, three silver and three bronze medals in total in international competitions. They competed in various science projects in Belgium, Indonesia, Kenya, the Netherlands, Romania and the US. On May 29, 2016 Senegal's minister of energy, Aly Ngouye Ndiaye, received the students from the school who won bronze medals at the competition in the Netherlands and recognized them for receiving medals.¹³ Ndiaye congratulated the students on their award-winning renewable energy project, "1,1,2,3,5 to Electricity." He said, "As the ministry, we will support this project by obtaining its patent." Another Yavuz Selim project awarded a bronze medal in the Netherlands was titled "Doing More With Less Geodesic Structure."

The Quartz Africa wrote: "The schools had a reputation for excellence, ranking for years among Senegal's best. Students got top scores in national exams, and went on to study at international universities."¹⁴

Crackdown on Gülen Movement Schools

The Onset

Immediately after the July 15, 2016 coup attempt, the Turkish government dramatically increased pressure on the Senegalese government to close the schools linked to the Gülen movement and hand them over to Turkey's Maarif Foundation as part of its global witch-hunt. A little more than a month after the failed coup, a Turkish delegation paid a visit to Senegal to formally ask the government to shut down schools affiliated with the Gülen movement.¹⁵ According to Quartz Africa, Erdoğan's administration had been urging Senegalese authorities for three years to close the schools.¹⁶

11] "Aliou Badara Ndiaye 2e Meilleur Élève Au Niveau National, 29 July 2016, <http://www.enqueteplus.com/content/aliou-badara-ndiaye-2e-meilleur-élève-au-niveau-national-handicapé-crack-et-futur-magistrat>

12] Ibid.

13] <http://www.gsyavuzselim.edu.sn/nos-remerciements-au-ministre-de-lenergie-et-des-mines-aly-ngouye-ndiaye/>

14] "A battle for power in Turkey faces resistance in Senegal", Quartz Africa, 6 December 2017, <https://qz.com/1147965/a-battle-for-power-in-turkey-faces-resistance-in-senegal/>

15] "A battle for power in Turkey faces resistance in Senegal", Quartz Africa, 6 December 2017, <https://qz.com/1147965/a-battle-for-power-in-turkey-faces-resistance-in-senegal/>

16] Ibid.



Année scolaire 2016 / 2017

NOS REALISATIONS

LES INSCRIPTIONS SONT EN COURS POUR L'ANNEE SCOLAIRE 2017 / 2018

20 ans

Un regard différent sur l'éducation

LA MEILLEURE ECOLE PRIVÉE AU SÉNÉGAL SELON LES RESULTATS DU CONCOURS GÉNÉRAL 2017

CONCOURS GENERAL	LES MENTIONS AU COURS DES 6 DERNIERS ANNEES	BAC 2017	BFEM 2017	CFEE 2017
DANS LES 9 DERNIERES ANNEES TOTAL 81 PRIX DONT 11 PRIX EN 2017	03 TRES BIEN 45 BIEN 24 ABIEEN (2017) 113 ASSEZ BIEN	SERIE S1: 91,30% SERIE S2: 67,61% SERIE L2: 80,48% SERIE L'1: 100%	TAUX DE REUSSITE 74,63%	TAUX DE REUSSITE 100%

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An advertising that shows the achievements of Yavuz Selim schools in 2016 and 2017.

At first, few expected the Senegalese government would go after these extremely high-profile and popular schools. Despite immense pressure from Ankara, the authorities initially refrained from taking any action against these successful schools where many children of the elite also studied.¹⁷

High-ranking officials who sent their children to Gülen movement schools include Senegalese Minister of National Education Serigne Mbaye Thiam, Minister of Justice Sidiki Kaba, Minister of Energy Thierno Alassane Sall, Minister of Fisheries and Marine Economy Oumar Gueye, President of the Thies Provincial Government Yankoba Diattara and Thies Provincial Governor Alioune Badara Samb.

When the Erdoğan government started threatening Gülen sympathizers in Senegal, Minister Kaba and his wife visited his son's school, L'école Yavuz Selim Printemps de Thies, to express his solidarity.

Senegalese media argued that shutting down the Yavuz Selim schools would be a blow not only to its many students but to overall education in Senegal as well, a country where about one-third of children remain out of school and the literacy rate hovers at around 57.7 per cent.¹⁸

Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK)

The Erdoğan regime has been using financial investments and incentives as important tools

17] Ibid.

18] Ibid.

to pursue a campaign of harassment and intimidation of dissidents abroad. Turkish foreign aid, pro-government business associations and private companies close to the regime are often part of the scheme. One of the organizations that have effectively lobbied on behalf of the Turkish government in Senegal as well as in other countries is the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK).

DEİK is a semi-private organization with a nationwide platform in Turkey consisting of representatives from the business world. The president of the forum is appointed by the Ministry of Economy, resulting in considerable government control.¹⁹ Established in 1986 with the mission of executing and coordinating the Turkish private sector's foreign economic relations,²⁰ DEİK functions as a "business diplomacy" organization under the supervision of the state.²¹

During the post-coup witch-hunt, *Sabah*, a newspaper run by the Erdogan family,²² published a news report titled "First Front Against FETÖ is Senegal," on August 29, 2016.²³ The report laid out DEİK's lobbying efforts in Senegal against pro-Gülen movement business enterprises. İhsan Şahin, the president of DEİK's Senegal Business Council, was quoted in the newspaper as saying that on a trip to Senegal July 22-25, 2016 they brought up Gülen movement activities and received assurances from the authorities that about 15 schools would be shut down.

Şahin added: "The trip had two main purposes. First of all, telling them everything is on track in Turkey after the July 15 coup attempt. We conveyed our president's greetings to the Senegalese authorities we were visiting as DEİK. ... There are around 15 FETÖ schools in Senegal. They are all across the country. After our contacts, the Senegalese government said, 'The required measures will be taken.' When we were there, the Ministry of Education held a meeting on the issue. Therefore, the Ministry of Education, our embassy and DEİK are working together for the next step. ... The Senegalese people, authorities and government love our President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. When one mentions our president's name, Tayyip Erdoğan, everything gets easier. They have a great affection for the Turkish people, and they see us as sister nations. They are very sincere. Senegalese people recognize two leaders: One of them is the Senegalese president, and the other is our President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Every person we came across in the street conveyed their greetings to our president. This sympathy both facilitates our trade activities there and makes it possible to eradicate FETÖ's organization there."

19] <https://www.deik.org.tr/deik-deik-hakkinda>

20] Ibid.

21] Ibid.

22] The CEO of the company that owns the newspaper is Serhat Albayrak, the brother of Berat Albayrak, Turkey's minister of finance. Berat Albayrak used to serve in management at this company as well.

23] "FETÖ'ye karşı ilk cephe Senegal", *Sabah*, 29 August 2016, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/ekonomi/2016/08/29/fetoye-karsi-ilk-cephe-senegal>

Turkey's Maarif Foundation (TMV)



The Erdoğan regime created the Maarif Foundation (TMV) in June 2016 to facilitate the takeover of Turkish schools abroad that are associated with the Gülen (Hizmet) movement.²⁴ In an address to a TMV delegation led by its president, Professor Birol Akgün,

Erdoğan gave them instructions about how they could contribute to his efforts targeting the movement: “If they say they operate in 170 countries, you will be in all 193 countries that are members of the UN. Start from the countries in which FETÖ is widespread and influential. Do not let FETÖ’s schools to be called ‘Turkish schools.’”²⁵ He also called for assistance for the TMV in this endeavor from all Turkish organizations with a global reach. Among the institutions that heeded the orders from Erdoğan to “support the Maarif Foundation expansion abroad” are the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), the Yunus Emre Institute, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities and the Directorate of Religious Affairs. One billion Turkish lira was disbursed to the Maarif foundation

from the Ministry of Education budget.²⁶

On foreign trips, Erdoğan personally pressed for the takeover and transfer of Gülen movement schools to the TMV²⁷ and often eventually achieved results, especially with governments with which Ankara has close relations. During the global purge launched after the July 15 coup, the first blow to the Gülen movement in Africa came from Somalia. Later, agreements were signed with Guinea, Chad and Sudan to hand over schools linked to the Gülen movement to Turkey’s Maarif Foundation. In West Africa, the Turkish government achieved its goal in Gambia, Guinea and Senegal.

Handover Decision for the Schools on December 7, 2016

The deputy chairman of Turkey’s Maarif Foundation, Hasan Yavuz, met with Senegal’s President Sall on November 24, 2016 requesting that he shut the schools down. Yavuz tweeted, “We met with the Senegalese president to tell him about the importance of the two

24] “Maarif Vakfı resmen kuruldu”, Sabah, 29 June 2016, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/egitim/2016/06/29/maarif-vakfi-resmen-kuruldu>

25] “Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan’dan Maarif Vakfı’na üç talimat”, Yeni Şafak, 29 September 2016, <http://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogandan-maarif-vakfina-uc-talimat-2538717>

26] Ibid.

27] Ibid.

Dr. Hasan Yavuz
@H_Yavuz07

Follow

Senegal de Fetö okulları TMV devrinde mutabakat tmm. Tüm Şehidlerimize Gazilerimize ve Kahraman Milletimize ve Devletimize hayırlı olsun.



9:31 AM - 27 Nov 2016

20 Retweets 55 Likes



Dr. Hasan Yavuz
@H_Yavuz07

Follow

Senegal Cmhbrşk ile görüşerek Ülke ilişkilerimizin önemi ve Fetö hassasiyetlerimizi anlattık.



12:39 PM - 24 Nov 2016

countries' relations and our sensitivity about FETÖ.”²⁸

On November 27, 2016, he posted another tweet announcing an agreement with the Senegalese government: “The agreement on the handing over of FETÖ schools in Senegal to the TMV is done. It is dedicated to our martyrs, veterans, heroic nation and state.”²⁹ Yavuz added, “We are trying to eradicate this organization everywhere.”³⁰

As a result of these attempts, the Senegalese government approved the handover of the schools linked to the Gülen movement to Turkey's Maarif Foundation on December 7, 2016. An official statement by Senegal's Ministry of Interior stated that all rights and authorizations of the Başkent Education Foundation, which had been active since April 16, 1998, were handed over to Turkey's Maarif Foundation. With this statement, the work and residence permits of all personnel of the schools were automatically revoked.

The president of Senegal, Macky Sall, spoke to a local newspaper and stated that Turkey's demands had not been fulfilled in the beginning but that things had changed after the July 15 coup attempt.³¹

Hasan Yavuz, the deputy president of Turkey's Maarif Foundation, announced from Twitter account on his meeting with Senegal President Sall on closure of Gülen schools.

During budget negotiations in the Senegalese Parliament on December 8, 2016, Minister of National Education Thiam announced that the schools would be handed over to Turkey's Maarif Foundation.³² Minister Thiam said in his second statement on December 27, 2016 that they were determined on the issue and signaled that they would not back down.³³ The minister said: “The students will receive a better education than in the current situation. None of the Senegalese staff will lose their jobs. They will continue working under better conditions.”

28] https://twitter.com/H_Yavuz07/status/801888073822900224

29] https://twitter.com/H_Yavuz07/status/802927922696699904

30] “Senegal'deki 6 FETÖ okulu TMV'ye devrediliyor”, Yeni Şafak, 7 December 2016, <https://www.yenisafak.com/dunya/senegaldeki-6-feto-okulu-tmvye-devrediliyor-2576336>

31] “A battle for power in Turkey faces resistance in Senegal”, Quartz Africa, 6 December 2017, <https://qz.com/1147965/a-battle-for-power-in-turkey-faces-resistance-in-senegal/>

32] “Fermeture de Yavuz Sélim : une conséquence de la purge d'Erdogan”, 26 December 2016, <http://intelligences.info/article-1454-fermeture-de-yavuz-slim-une-consquence-de-la-purge-d-erdogan.html>

33] “Fermeture de Yavuz Sélim : Les précisions de Serigne Mbaye Thiam”, 27 December 2016, Seneweb, http://www.seneweb.com/news/Education/fermeture-de-yavuz-selim-les-precisions-_n_202946.html

On December 30, 2016, Senegalese Minister of Foreign Affairs Mankeur Ndiaye said: “If a state that is your ally declares an organization to be illegal and terrorist and if this organization is active in your country, you cannot make a decision against your ally.”³⁴

Demonstrations Against the Decision

Demonstrations erupted in Senegal after the government’s handover decision. Students, parents and teachers of the schools joined the protests. A social media campaign was organized on Twitter under the hashtag “#donottouchmyschool.” Well-known Senegalese rap singer Malal Talla, also known as Fou Malade, gave a concert in the garden of Bosphore College on January 7, 2017 to express his solidarity.³⁵ Hundreds of families attended the concert to protest Turkish President Erdoğan’s influence over Senegal from thousands of kilometers away.³⁶ Fou Malade addressed the crowd and said, “We are independent, and we will not accept being under the rule of a foreign dictatorship!”³⁷ He defied the decision as an insult to diplomacy and democracy, calling on all Senegalese to join the resistance “because if we let these things happen today, we will recognize the Macky Sall dictatorship under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.”³⁸

The School Administration Appeals to the Court

The handover decision was officially conveyed to the school management on January 10, 2017. Soon after that, the administration applied to the court. On January 12, 2017 Bou-counta Diallo, lawyer for the Yavuz Selim schools, announced that they had appealed to the Constitutional Court seeking a stay of execution.³⁹

The Senegalese government had not implemented the decision for about a year despite

34] “Maarif va s’installer progressivement et ...”, Enquête Plus, 30 December 2016, <http://www.enqueteplus.com/content/mankeur-ndiaye-sur-la-crise-yavuz-selim-%E2%80%98%E2%80%98maarif-va-s%E2%80%99installer-progressivement-et-%E2%80%99%E2%80%99>

35] “Affaire Yavuz Selim – Fou Malade: « c’est une insulte à notre démocratie et notre diplomatie »”, Senego, 9 January 2017, https://senego.com/affaire-yavuz-selim-fou-malade-cest-une-insulte-a-notre-democratie-et-notre-diplomatie_422308.html

36] “A battle for power in Turkey faces resistance in Senegal”, Quartz Africa, 6 December 2017, <https://qz.com/1147965/a-battle-for-power-in-turkey-faces-resistance-in-senegal/>

37] Ibid.

38] “Affaire Yavuz Selim – Fou Malade: « c’est une insulte à notre démocratie et notre diplomatie »”, Senego, 9 January 2017, https://senego.com/affaire-yavuz-selim-fou-malade-cest-une-insulte-a-notre-democratie-et-notre-diplomatie_422308.html

39] “Affaire Yavuz Selim: la Cour suprême saisie”, Senego, 12 January 2017, https://senego.com/affaire-yavuz-selim-la-cour-supreme-saisie_423623.html

immense pressure from Ankara. Thus, the court postponed the procedures over and over again. On March 30, 2017, Senegal's Constitutional Court ruled the criteria had not been met for a stay of execution and thus they would wait and observe developments.⁴⁰ The schools continued education as usual until they were shut down in October 2017. The lawsuit challenging the closure is still going on.

Joint Venture with a French Company

While the debate over the closure of the schools was ongoing, the Başkent Education Foundation tried another method to secure its rights. They handed over all of their assets to Yavuz Selim, Inc., which they established on May 26, 2015. The Bosphore College building in Dakar became the property of the new company. (None of the other school buildings were owned by the foundation.) After handing over its assets, the Başkent Education Foundation only had the right to provide educational services.⁴¹

On September 5, 2017, Madiambal Diagne, chairman of the board of Yavuz Selim, Inc., held a press conference and announced that they had sold 64 percent of the shares of their company to French company Horizon Education. Diagne said that after the takeover they went to the French Embassy to inform the commercial attaché. Diagne added: "Now we are in a French-Senegalese school. We want to take this resistance to an international level. This is a business partnership, and we have to secure ourselves."⁴²

Erdoğan's Pressure Pays Off

The Senegalese government's approach to the schools crisis can best be described by a statement by Minister of Education Serigne Mbaye Thiam: "Nations do not have friendships, but relationships based on interests."⁴³ Senegalese authorities were only able to delay implementation of Erdoğan's demands until October 2017. Pro-AKP news agencies

40] "Affaire Yavuz Selim : Le juge des référés de la Cour Suprême conforte l'école", Dakaractu, 31 March 2017, https://www.dakaractu.com/Affaire-Yavuz-Selim-Le-juge-des-referes-de-la-Cour-Supreme-conforte-l-ecole_a129155.html

41] "Me Moussa Sarr (Conseiller de Yavuz Selim S.A): "Le ministre a tout faux", Depeche du Jour, <http://depechedujour.com/me-moussa-sarr-conseiller-de-yavuz-selim-s-a-le-ministre-a-tout-faux/>

42] "Education : Le capital de Yavuz Selim ouvert à des Français", Le Soleil, 6 September 2017, <http://www.lesoleil.sn/actualites/item/69492-education-le-capital-de-yavuz-selim-ouvert-a-des-francais.html> ; "Groupe scolaire Yavuz Selim : 64% des parts des turcs cédées à des français selon le PCA", Business 221, 5 September 2017, <https://www.business221.com/2017/09/05/groupe-scolaire-yavuz-selim-64-parts-turcs-cede-es-a-francais-selon-pca/>

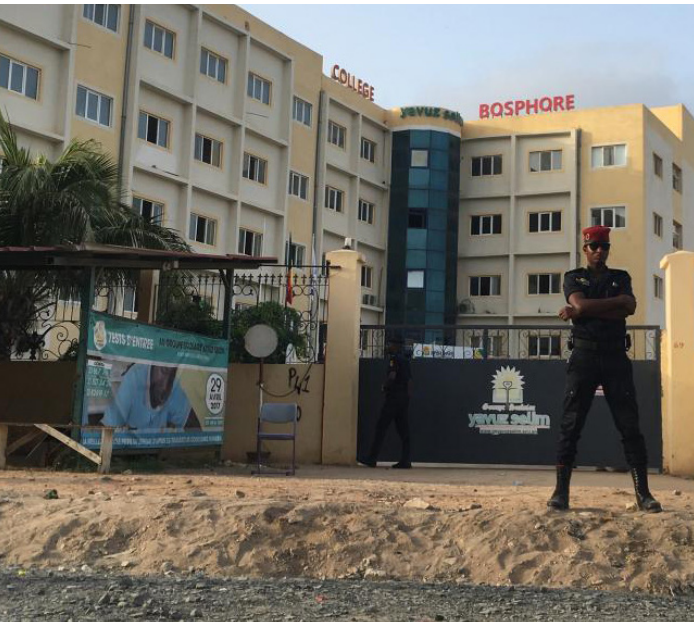
43] "Serigne Mbaye Thiam sur l'affaire Yavuz Selim: Les États N'ont Pas D'amis, Ils N'ont Que Des Intérêts", Le Quotidien, 17 February 2017, <http://www.lequotidien.sn/serigne-mbaye-thiam-sur-laffaire-yavuz-selim-les-etats-nont-pas-damis-ils-nont-que-des-interets/>

reported that the schools were going to be confiscated from the Gülen movement and handed over to the Maarif Foundation. Turkey's state news agency Anadolu Ajansı (AA) announced on October 2, 2017 that the schools had been closed down.⁴⁴

The Closure Decision for the Schools

President Sall made an official announcement about the school closures on October 12, 2017, saying, "The Turkish government has been persistently demanding the closure of

these schools for three years." Sall added that they requested evidence from the Turkish government about the schools' involvement of any criminal activity and resisted their demands. However, after the July 15 coup attempt some African countries started to close down the schools, and the Senegalese decided to follow suit.⁴⁵ He also said, "Acting on demand of the Republic of Turkey, the state of Senegal has decided to no longer work with the Gülen movement."



Police Surround Bosphore College

On the morning of October 13, law enforcement officers surrounded Bosphore College and let no one into the school including students. Because the school building belonged to the Başkent Education Foundation, some administrators were able to get in. However, since the Senegalese government had banned its educational activities, they were unable to pursue school

activities.

After studies were interrupted by the authorities, a group of about 20 angry parents came to the school premises and demanded a meeting with management to discuss the reimbursement of tuition fees. Because of the police barricade, the parents were not allowed into the school. However, deputy school administrators H.P. and M.A. agreed to the parents' request to meet, and the police let them in. The parents said were not leaving until they "got [their] money back." H.P. and M.A. reassured the parents, saying: "Of course you will get a refund, but you are coming and asking for your money on the first day.

44] "Senegal: FETO-linked schools closed by government", Anadolu Ajansı, 2 October 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/en/africa/senegal-feto-linked-schools-closed-by-government/925055>

45] "Fermeture de Yavuz Sélim : Macky avoue et s'explique", Seneweb, 12 October 2017, http://www.seneweb.com/news/Education/fermeture-de-yavuz-selim-macky-avoue-et-_n_229424.html

The executive board is having a meeting right now. They are discussing this issue as well. We will inform you after the meeting is over.” The assurances did not calm the parents, who said they did not care about the meeting and that they would wait until the payments were disbursed. They confiscated M.A.’s mobile phone and a laptop on the desk. They later stormed into the room where the board meeting was taking place. They attempted to take the mobile phones of the four board members. H.P. and M.A. told the parents: “You are the parents of our school. Your problem is with us. Let the board members of the education foundation go.” The four members of the executive board left the building immediately after that.

Parents Take Two School Officials Hostage

After the four board members left, angry parents who were demanding the reimbursement of tuition held school officials H.P. and M.A. hostage until 8 p.m. They were rescued by the military police, who subsequently raided the building. The police were pretending as if they were detaining the managers; however, some suspicious parents secretly followed the police car and spotted the managers getting out of the cruiser and fleeing in a taxi.

All the teachers used to live in buildings surrounding the school. Most of the parents knew where the teachers lived. Due to security concerns, the teachers had to move to different locations. At the time there were only 20 teachers left in Senegal. After these incidents their departure from the country accelerated.

School official H.P. (38), also Turkish language teacher, who was held hostage, described the events that day to SCF. “I have been working as a teacher in Senegal for four years. I am a father of two. On Friday October 13 around 10 a.m. some parents came to the school. They asked for a refund of the tuition fees. First, they walked into our manager’s office. They sat down and wouldn’t leave. There were four or five people in the beginning, but the number grew and reached 20. They refused to leave without a refund. Our manager, Sedat Cerrahoğlu, went to the general manager’s office and spoke with management there. The parents told us, ‘Do not try to convince us, we will not leave without getting our money back.’ The manager’s return was delayed, and the parents walked into the general manager’s office. They attempted to confiscate the laptops and mobile phones they saw there. They put their hands into M.A.’s pocket to find money and they took his mobile phone. They again walked to the Bosphore College building and into Mr. Sedat’s office. They calculated what was owed them and demanded 15,000,000 CFA (around 22,000 euros). At first they did not do anything to me. They asked us to call the accounting office. ‘We will release you when they bring our money,’ they said. They did not even let us go to Friday prayers. The parents are Muslims as well, but they said, ‘We are not going to pray today, it has been cancelled.’ Later, the military came to the building and tried to persuade the parents. The parents insisted that they would not leave without getting their money back. We said, ‘We are teachers, not accountants, we don’t have any money.’ They refused to let us go and said, ‘After you leave, we won’t be able to find anybody else in authority to ask for our money.’

Later, a commander came and said: ‘What you are doing right now is a crime. We will take action unless you leave right now.’ As a result, they left the building. Only two parents refused to leave, and they challenged the commander. We calmed the commander down. The parents spoke to the press at the entrance of the school. We stayed in the manager’s office until 8 p.m. Another commander came and said they would take us from the building. They came to the school in a military van and took us away. They told the parents they were detaining us. This was the way they were able to get us out of there. However, some of the parents followed us. We drove around quite a bit. The van stopped on a street and we got into the car of a Senegalese friend. The parents’ car continued tailing us. We drove to some back streets and hopped in a taxi. We drove around to lose them. We arrived home after midnight, around 1 a.m. We never went back to the school after that day. We were not able to leave our houses for a while. It took us a week to recover from the shock. Some parents threatened us by saying, ‘If we see your children, we will kidnap them.’ We heard it. Our children did not go outside for two weeks. They could not go to school. We had to move.”

M.A. (37), another school official who is also a Turkish language and literature teacher, also offered an account of the events: “I am a father of two. That day they literally took us hostage. Our mobile phones and laptops were confiscated. We were not allowed to see to our basic needs. They did not let us pray or eat. They continued to come to the school and abuse the managers.”

Financial Aid from the Erdoğan Government

According to the French and Senegalese media, the schools were shut down in October 2017, 10 months after the handover order of December 2016, thanks to the financial aid the Erdoğan regime provided to the Senegalese government.

President Erdoğan and his ministers were constantly pressuring the Senegalese authorities for the closure of the schools during their visits.⁴⁶ Moreover, Turkey offered financial aid to the Senegalese government for this purpose.⁴⁷ According to French newspaper *Le Monde*, in order for the schools to be shut down, Ankara promised \$7.5 million in initial funding to Senegal for three years and had already paid \$2.5 million as of October 2017. “It is now difficult for Macky Sall to back down,” wrote *Le Monde*.⁴⁸ Local Senegalese media outlets

46] “Fermeture de Yavuz Sélim : Macky avoue et s’explique”, *Seneweb*, 12 October 2017, http://www.seneweb.com/news/Education/fermeture-de-yavuz-selim-macky-avoue-et-_n_229424.html ; “İçişleri Bakanı Soylu’dan Senegal’e FETÖ uyarısı”, *Anadolu Ajansı*, 6 September 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/icisleri-bakani-soyludan-senegale-feto-uyarisi/903011>

47] “Fermeture des écoles Gülen au Sénégal : comment Dakar a cédé aux pressions d’Erdoğan”, *Le Monde*, 6 October 2017, http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/10/06/fermeture-des-ecoles-gulen-au-senegal-comment-dakar-a-cede-aux-pressions-d-erdogan_5197352_3212.html

48] *Ibid.*

reported that the Turkish government promised 7.5 million euros.⁴⁹

The Erdoğan administration promised to make investments in Senegal as well. In February 2016, en route to Latin America, Erdoğan's plane refueled in Senegal.⁵⁰ He met with President Sall during this short visit. After the private meeting and a meeting of delegates at Dakar Leopold Sedar Senghor Airport, a joint press conference was held. President Sall said Turkish entrepreneurs had made significant investments in Senegal. He also said they were proud of the International Diamniadio Conference Hall that Summa Construction had built. Sall said a multipurpose stadium with a 15,000-person capacity, a sports complex and a five star hotel would be built as part of this project and added: "Moreover, I would like to announce that Turkish companies Summa and Limak⁵¹ will build a new international airport in Senegal and be involved in its operation. As you can see we have a good multi-level partnership with Turkey."

Suspicious Incidents

'Extra personnel' at the embassy

Previously unknown Turks appeared in Dakar after the announcement was made in December 2016 that Hizmet movement schools would be handed over to the Maarif Foundation, according to remarks to SCF made by some participants of the movement who used to live in Senegal and who sought refuge in various countries.

One such source, Mesut Gökçan Ateş, chairman of the board of the Atlantique-Turquie Senegal Association (ATSA), said friends from the Senegalese intelligence community frequently warned him about these unknown Turkish civilians. In his comments to SCF Ateş revealed information about the Şefkat Yolu Association, a staunchly pro- Erdoğan organization in Senegal, and its chairman E.B.

"One day a high-ranking Senegalese intelligence official invited me to a meeting. He told me that I was being followed by some people from Turkey and that they wanted to abduct me and take me to Turkey. He briefed me on what I should do in the event of an abduction attempt and how I could contact him if anything were to happen to me. Meanwhile, this intelligence official interrogated E. B., confirming that there were Turkish agents in Senegal. He learned that there were more than 12 people who were permanently staying at the Şefkat

49] "Affaire Yavuz Selim: La Turquie aurait payé 5 milliards", Seneweb, 9 October 2017, http://www.seneweb.com/news/Societe/affaire-yavuz-selim-la-turquie-aurait-pa_n_229079.html

50] "Erdoğan'dan Senegal'e kısa ziyaret", Sabah, 5 February 2016, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/galeri/turkiye/erdogandan-senegale-kisa-ziyaret>

51] Limak is known in Turkey for being very close to Erdoğan. Many public contracts are given to Limak, and it is claimed that it is a member of the 'financial pool' created on Erdoğan's orders.

association's guesthouse disguised as 'extra personnel of the embassy.' This was in January 2017. ... We thought these people could be militia members of SADAT.⁵² Some of our colleagues encountered them at shopping malls. They were well built and apparently had military training.”

Ateş shared the safety tips he received from the Senegalese intelligence officers with the management of the Turkish Yavuz Selim School. The management of the foundation to which the schools are linked warned the teachers and asked them to be vigilant, not to go out at night and to take precautions about possible child abduction.

Increasing incidents of theft

Ateş said after the arrival of the unfamiliar Turks, they experienced things they had never experienced in 20 years of living in Senegal. For example, a series of suspicious thefts involving the teachers took place. They perceived this as an intimidation tactic designed to inflict psychological pressure so that they would return to Turkey and be apprehended.

Some of the suspicious incidents are as follows:

In March 2017 mobile phones belonging to Adnan Hoşoğlu, chairman of the board of Yavuz Selim, were stolen. He filed a complaint with the police, but it was not taken seriously. Hoşoğlu now lives in another country.

In April 2017 thieves broke into Mesut Gökçan Ateş's car and stole his mobile phone. Speaking to SCF, Ateş said: “The theft was very professional. I do not remember the exact date. A man approached me with a piece of paper in his hand appearing to be a beggar. He stole my phone and ran away. He seemed very professional.”

In May 2017 burglars broke into the house of Mehmet İzol, the general manager of Yavuz Selim. The burglars ran away when his 15-year-old son screamed. Even though İzol complained, the police did not take his complaint seriously. Following the incident, Mehmet Erkam, İzol's son, could not sleep alone at night and had nightmares.

In June 2017 burglars twice broke into the house of Yücel Özkarakaş, general manager of Le Groupe Scolaire Eyup Sultan under the Başkent Education Foundation. The police ig-

^{52]} The company named SADAT (International Defense Consulting) is accused of being a paramilitary army of Erdoğan directed by Adnan Tanrıverdi, a political Islamist and former general in the Turkish Armed Forces. Michael Rubin, a former Pentagon official and an analyst at the American Enterprise Institute, claimed that SADAT appears to have been behind much of the killing of civilians during the July 15, 2016 coup attempt. (See “Erdoğan prepares for a bloodbath,” Michael Rubin, American Enterprise Institute, 31 October 2016, <https://www.aei.org/publication/erdogan-prepares-for-a-bloodbath/>)

nored his complaints as well. Özkarakas and his family are currently refugees in another country.

In June 2017 robbers stopped English teacher Adem Erdem on the street and stole his laptop. Erdem now lives in another country.

Plight of the Educators

The Exodus

The Erdogan regime has been cracking down on the Gülen movement since early 2014; however, concern among the school staff about being arrested in Senegal and handed over to the Erdoğan regime, or being deported, dramatically increased after the July 15, 2016 coup attempt. Teachers and businesspeople linked to the Gülen movement started to look for ways to leave Senegal. Assuming Erdoğan would have more leverage over countries where the rule of law did not prevail, the school management asked all personnel to apply for visas to third countries in order to leave in case of any further risk. Those who already had visas started leaving the country.

Gazi Murat Karadağ, a school manager who spoke to SCF, described the mood among the staff after hearing about the decision of the Senegalese government to hand over schools to the Erdogan government: “We interpreted it as the Senegalese government preparing to sacrifice us and hand us over to the Erdoğan regime. Our anxiety increased.”

Mehmet İzol, the general manager of Le Groupe Scolaire Yavuz Selim, applied to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for protection on January 9, 2017. He stated on his application that there were 87 Turkish teachers, 67 families and in total 240 people who might be targeted by the Erdogan regime in Senegal. Humanitarian protection was requested for 29 people who did not have a valid passport at the time. However, because Senegal is a country that accepts refugees, the UN did not provide protective status and said the applicants first needed to file for asylum with Senegalese authorities and that they would observe the process. The Senegalese government initially accepted applications for humanitarian protection from some teachers on an interim basis and granted a three-month stay. But no one was granted permanent refugee status.

Arrests in Turkey

Yalçın Sarı, manager of Etude Plus language school under Yavuz Selim, went to Turkey in March 2016 for family reasons. According to information received from the Yavuz Selim administration, Sarı was arrested in his hometown of Kırşehir as part of the crackdown on

the Hizmet movement on charges of membership in an armed terrorist organization. Sarı is still in prison.

Adnan Demir, a former manager at Yavuz Selim who returned to Turkey before the coup attempt, is under arrest as well. His family confirmed he is incarcerated but did not reveal the name of the prison.

Ibrahim Palabıyık, a former English language teacher at Yavuz Selim who returned to Turkey before the coup attempt, was arrested in Istanbul and sentenced to seven years.

Investigations and Detention Warrants

After the July 15 coup attempt, several investigations were launched into some of the staff members of the schools in Senegal. Detention warrants were issued based on trumped-up charges. Among the victims were Adnan Hoşoğlu, chairman of the board of Le Groupe Scolaire Yavuz Selim; Mehmet İzol, general manager of Yavuz Selim; Yunus Oğuz, deputy general manager of Yavuz Selim; Yücel Özkarakas, general manager of Le Groupe Scolaire Eyup Sultan, which is under the umbrella of the Başkent Education Foundation; and İhsan İnal, education consultant to Le Groupe Scolaire Yavuz Selim. Businessman Mesut Gökçan Ateş, chairman of the board of the Atlantique-Turquie Senegal Association (ATSA), is also reportedly under investigation.

Soylu: They Walk Around Freely Here

While visiting Dakar on September 6, 2017 to attend the Turkey-Senegal Joint Economic Commission (JEC) 4th Term Meeting, Turkey's Minister of Internal Affairs Süleyman Soylu said: "There are some FETÖ members here who walk around freely. It is very important for us that the Senegalese government return these terrorists to Turkey."⁵³

Pressure on Family Members in Turkey

The Erdogan regime often goes after the loved ones of suspected Gülen movement participants. Some family members and relatives of the victims listed above have also been subjected to retaliatory pressure and legal action in Turkey.

Gazi Murat Karadağ, manager of L'ecole Yavuz Selim Printemps de Thies, and Lokman

53] "İçişleri Bakanı Soylu'dan Senegal'e FETÖ uyarısı", Anadolu Ajansı, 6 September 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/icisleri-bakani-soyludan-senegale-feto-uyarisi/903011>

Nurçin, accountant for Ecole Elementaire Cascades Yavuz Selim in the city of Cascades, reported to SCF that their families and relatives were under pressure in Turkey because of them.

Due to security concerns, the victims did not reveal the names of their relatives in Turkey.

G. Murat Karadağ's Brother Is Arrested

English teacher Murat Karadağ (44), a father of three, used to work as the manager of the school in the Thies region of Senegal. After the attempted coup, his family and relatives in Turkey were subjected to intimidation because of him. Karadağ spoke to SCF and said:

“After July 15, my mother told me: ‘Our phones are wiretapped, son. There are undercover police in the neighborhood. Do not try to contact anyone from the family. No one can speak to you. If they do, they will be in trouble.’ After this, I did not contact any of my family members for three or four months. Even if I called now and then, nobody picked up the phone, neither my sisters nor my brother. Some of them even changed their numbers.

“In December 2016 my mother picked up the phone and said my brother had been arrested three weeks earlier. Later I learned that my brother F. K. was arrested on November 9, 2016 for alleged membership in an armed terrorist organization [Hizmet movement affiliation]. My mother only said that it was because of me and told me, ‘Do not call us again even if we die.’

“After this, I did not speak with my mother or father for months. I did not hear anything from anyone. In March 2017 my mother picked up the phone after my persistent calls and told me my brother had been released in February. I was very happy to hear that and wanted to talk to him. My mother said: ‘You are in serious trouble. No one can talk to you right now. Do not try to contact your brother.’ Later I learned that my brother was released under judicial supervision on February 28, 2017.

“Meanwhile, we were in a very difficult position in Senegal. We were also dealing with that. Our school was officially shut down on December 7, 2016. Our residence permits, which were issued on behalf of the school, became invalid when the government halted the educational activities of the association. We continued using unauthorized residence permits. We had to leave the country after February.”

“During this period, we learned that Turkey’s embassy in Dakar had a list of people. They had submitted this list to the Senegalese Ministry of Interior for deportation, and they were closely following the list. It was a list of individuals in Senegal who were linked to the Hizmet movement. As a manager, I was also on that list. We learned this from Ma-

diambal Diagne, chairman of the board of Yavuz Selim, Inc., the umbrella organization for our schools. Mr. Diagne is a highly influential and wealthy local businessman. He was following these developments via his lawyers on our behalf. He owns the Le Quotidien newspaper, is chairman of the West African Journalists Association and is a close friend of Senegal's President Macky Sall. Mr. Diagne confirmed that this list was shown to him at the Ministry of Interior. He also told us that President Sall showed him photos of four people who are our friends and said that the Turkish state was after these people.

“Naturally, my friends and I were very worried during this period. We were afraid of being deported or handed over to Turkish intelligence. Because of that, I was looking for ways to go to another safe country, just like all Yavuz Selim staff and Hizmet members.

“I was not able to contact my family in Turkey. I called my older sister in August 2017. She picked up the phone. It was the first time I was able to contact one of my family members in months. My sister told me about the interrogation of my brother. They asked my brother many questions about me during the interrogation. They asked where I was, and he replied he did not know. They asked for my contact details and address. And they told him, ‘You will see what is going to happen to your brother when he lands at our airport.’ They meant bringing me to Turkey by force. That’s how I learned that there was an arrest warrant out for me. I also double-checked this by way of other methods in Turkey. I have a friend who is a police officer. He checked the database and told me that there was an arrest warrant in my name. Now I am waiting for my asylum claim to be adjudicated. However, I am also very anxious about the safety of my family in Turkey because there is no more rule of law there, and they take people hostage as in tribal communities. There was no crime. My only ‘crime’ was being a teacher at a school that was linked to the Gülen movement. The Turkish government is engaging in guilt by association to come after me. In order to get you, they interrogate or arrest your family members.”

Threats to Lokman Nurçin’s Family

Lokman Nurçin (29) is a father of one and was working as an accountant at Ecole Elementaire Cascades Yavuz Selim in Cascades. Before going there, he worked as the manager of a dormitory in the Sarıkamış district of Kars province in Turkey. He later became an accountant. He had been working at the Turkish school in Senegal since March 2014. During the witch-hunt, police went to his parents’ house in Kars. They asked about Nurçin’s whereabouts and threatened them. Here is Lokman Nurçin’s account of events as told to SCF:

“On a Sunday towards the end of 2014 or the beginning of 2015, someone knocked the door of my apartment in Dakar. I was living on the third floor. I looked through the peephole. It was the doorkeeper. My French is not very good. He pointed at the stairs. I saw two white and one African man waiting there. The white men were Turks. They told me in Turkish, ‘We work here, we wanted to visit you.’ To be honest, I was scared. At the time, a witch-hunt had already started in Turkey against the Hizmet movement due to corruption inves-

tigations that were revealed December 17-25, 2013. I thought this could have been related to it. That is why I felt worried. I changed my clothes and went downstairs. We went to the garden of the school and had a chat.

“The black man who I guess was Senegalese was wearing sunglasses and did not speak at all. He did not say a word. The two Turkish men said they were members of the Hizmet movement; they came to Senegal for their decorating business and wanted to visit us before they returned. I did not understand why they chose me. Why didn’t they go to the managers of the school instead of me? They asked me questions like ‘How many students and personnel are there at the school? Where do the teachers live?’ They pointed at the buildings around mine and asked, ‘Do they live in these buildings?’ I answered all their questions, saying: ‘I don’t know, either. I just arrived here.’ They asked where I came from. When I said Kars, they asked whether it was the Sarıkamış district. I asked them how they knew it. They said, ‘It is a famous place.’ Then I went quiet, and they left.

“I immediately went back to my apartment and watched them from the window. They turned left past the school. I waited a bit. This time they came back from the other side of the school and walked into the garden. I called then-deputy general manager of the school Mehmet İzol to inform him. Meanwhile I was watching them. A school employee went up to them. They chatted a bit. Then they left and walked towards the dormitory. I was very worried. I called the high school teacher, Mr. Oktay, who used to live on the lower floor. He called the dormitory. He learned that these people went to the dormitory, claimed that they were my friends, took some photos and had tea. Later, we investigated these people and were unable to confirm any ties to the Hizmet movement. We understood they were from Turkish intelligence and came to Senegal to collect intel on us.”

Nurçin told SCF that after the July 15 coup attempt his family members in Kars were harassed. “In December 2016 undercover police officers approached my brother on his way to the village and asked him whether he knew anyone called ‘Lokman Nurçin.’ When he said he was my brother, they asked him to get in their car and said they were police. They told my brother that there was an investigation into me and that I needed to return to Turkey and surrender to the police. They told him: ‘He should return. He would stay in prison only for a maximum two months. What would happen to his wife and daughter if something were to happen to him abroad? The Republic of Turkey is a powerful state. We even arrested Apo [jailed leader of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK)]. He should not think that we cannot come and pick him up overseas. We want him to come and surrender so he won’t receive an aggravated sentence.’

“What did I do wrong? According to them, being part in the Hizmet movement was illegal. They fabricated a crime for me. My brother called me and informed me about this conversation. I told him: ‘I did not do anything wrong. Why would I stay in prison for even a month? I don’t want to be tortured. What would happen to my wife? They might arrest her as well. I don’t know if they would put my child in foster care. I am not accepting this.’

“They continued to pressure my brother. A month later they went to my grandmother’s house in the village. They threatened her, saying, ‘Bad things will happen if he does not return.’ Then they made my brother call me to persuade me to return. My father has lung cancer. They said, ‘Look, your dad is sick.’ They tried to convince me with that. They said; ‘What would happen to his family if something happens to him abroad?’ Through my brother they asked me at least to call them even if I was unable to go to Turkey. I told my brother: ‘I won’t call them and I won’t return to Turkey. They should not waste their time coming to your house. Tell them that you have disowned me. Tell them ‘He is no longer our son.’ I’m afraid to go there. My life is in danger there.’

“On February 17, 2017, we arrived in this country where I currently reside and sought refuge. In April my brother called me to tell me that the police went to my parents’ house again. They told my father that they had a search warrant. This time police and soldiers went there together and searched the house. They confiscated two of Fethullah Gülen’s books that I had given my nephew as a gift. There was my graduation photo on the wall, and they took it. They asked questions about me and my wife. A month later they went to my parents’ house again, this time for my wife, and searched the house again. I am worried about my family.”

Target List Delivered to Senegalese Government

Chairman of ATSA Mesut Gökçan Ateş and school manager Gazi Murat Karadağ told SCF that President Erdoğan personally requested the extradition of some Turkish citizens from President Sall. Their source was Madiambal Diagne, chairman of the board of Yavuz Selim, Inc., and a close friend Sall, who warned the Turkish teachers through Diagne. Ateş confirmed this with a high-ranking official in Senegalese intelligence and learned that he was one of the people whose extradition was being requested from the Senegalese president.

Ateş told SCF: “One day a high-ranking official from Senegalese intelligence called me to say there was an arrest warrant out for me and that the [Turkish] Embassy had requested my extradition. He advised me to go to a democratic country. He said they wanted to abduct me and take to Turkey. President Sall showed him four photos including ones of Mehmet İzol and me and said the Turkish government wanted these people. This intelligence official told me, ‘As you can see, I am in a very difficult position and under immense pressure.’ He gave me a short briefing about what to do in case someone follows me and how to reach him if anything were to happen to me. He advised me to change my car and stay at different locations for my safety.

“After hearing this, I decided to leave the country. First, they issued a criminal complaint for my allegedly pointing to employees of the Maarif Foundation as targets. The court date was set for October 9, 2017. The intelligence official advised me to definitely stay away from the court because if I went there, they would cause a scene and hand me over to Turkish intelligence. The ninth of October was a Monday. I did not go to court. I bought myself

a plane ticket to Sweden via France for Tuesday at 11 p.m. Later I called the airport's VIP service manager, who was a friend of mine. I told him: 'I am flying to Paris tonight. I will be at the airport at 9 p.m. I would like to say goodbye before I leave.' He said he would be waiting for me. However, when I realized I would not be able to have all my luggage ready, I changed the ticket. I bought another ticket to Sweden via Portugal at 1 a.m. Around 9 p.m. the VIP service manager called me and said: 'Is everything all right, Mesut? The police are looking for you on the plane and checking the flight manifest.' My phone must have been wiretapped. Since I had said I would fly at 9 p.m. on the phone, the police were there. Two hours later I went to the airport and with the help of my friend I managed to take the plane to Portugal. Because my wife and children's passports had expired, they had to stay in Senegal. I went to Sweden.

"After I left, my family attempted to leave Senegal with fake documents, but failed on their first attempt. Then I moved to the country I currently reside in because I was under the impression that the family reunion process would be easier there. My family eventually managed to leave Senegal. They went to a third safe country via a connecting flight. Now I am an asylum seeker in this country, and my family members are asylum seekers in another. I do not know which of us will be granted refugee status first. Our only dream is to reunite as a family."

Teachers' Visa Applications Were Mostly Rejected

When the Senegalese government decided to hand over the Gülen movement-affiliated schools, many teachers tried to obtain visas from safe countries, fearing abduction by Turkish intelligence and extradition to Turkey. However, the majority of their visa applications were denied, according to victim statements made to SCF, because the teachers' work permits were automatically cancelled due to the handover decision of December 7, 2016.

Because Senegal is a former French colony and its official language is French, most teachers applied for a visa to France. However, the French Embassy rejected in total 37 applicants. Germany issued a visa for English language teacher E. G. but subsequently cancelled it. Belgium, Spain and Greece rejected the visa applications as well. A few people managed to get US visas; however, after January 2017 that country stopped issuing visas to the victims as well.

Being trapped inside a country closely aligned with the reckless Turkish government caused the educators and their families tremendous distress. Gazi Murat Karadağ's wife, Aynur Karadağ (40), described the feelings of the spouses of staff members: "Those whose passports had expired or were about to expire felt depressed because they knew the Erdoğan regime had plans to abduct dissidents in some countries. Their sleeping patterns were disrupted. When we got together, we always talked about this. We were anx-

iously asking each other questions like ‘Will our husbands be able to come home? Will they be abducted in the streets? Will anything happen to our children?’ When the children arrived home, their mothers asked them: ‘Did you see any strangers around the school? Did you see your father at the school? Were there any strangers on the street?’ We were all worried. We were checking on each other every morning when we woke up. ‘Is everything all right? Has anyone been abducted? Was anyone’s house raided last night?’ If our doorbells rang at night, we were worried it could be the police. Some families developed eating disorders and a loss of appetite due to the stress.”

Passport Hurdles

The Turkish government’s arbitrary passport cancellations and refusal to issue new passports to witch-hunt victims in Senegal have caused many troubles.

Children who went Turkey were unable to return

Businessman A.İ.A.’s wife E. A. went to Turkey along with her children for a holiday in June 2016. After the coup attempt in July 2016, she went to the airport in August to return to Senegal. She was told their passports were cancelled and that they had been denounced. She was interrogated and released, but they banned her from leaving the country. They could not return to Senegal. Since then, businessman A.İ.A lives in fear in Senegal, and he and his family remain separated.

The tragedy of the Akel family

Hakan Akel (37), an English teacher at Yavuz Selim Bosphore College in Dakar for six years, had a baby girl (Etka), born on November 15, 2016. The family applied for a national ID card and passport, but the Turkish Embassy refused to issue these documents for their newborn.

Their other daughter, Zeynep (6), who has a disease of the capillary vessels, had been going to Turkey every year for treatment. In 2015 she was taken to Turkey and underwent treatment for six months. She was due for a follow-up in 2016. Four months after Etka was denied consular services, they had to visit the embassy, for Zeynep this time. The embassy requested health reports on Zeynep’s condition. After one of their relatives got the report from the hospital and sent it from Istanbul, the embassy issued a temporary travel document for the newborn baby. Akel’s wife Arife and the children went to Turkey for treatment. However, due to the delay, Zeynep’s health deteriorated.

After Zeynep’s treatment, Arife Akel wanted to return to Senegal and applied for a passport for baby Etka. The authorities requested a letter of consent from the father of the baby.

Hakan Akel went to the Turkish Embassy, but they refused to serve him because he worked at Yavuz Selim. Hakan obtained a notarized consent letter approved by Senegalese authorities and sent it to Turkey. However, police stations in four districts of Istanbul refused to issue a passport for the baby because the embassy did not stamp the letter. A fifth one accepted it and issued a passport for the baby.

When Arife Akel went to the airport with her children to return to Senegal, she was detained by the police and interrogated. She was asked questions such as ‘Why are you going to Senegal? Where is your husband? What is his job? Why does not he come to Turkey?’ The police submitted a document to Arife Akel stating that their passports had been cancelled. They were released with a ban on overseas travel.

Mrs. Akel tried again to apply for a passport at a police station in December 2017. A police officer verbally abused her and treated her as if she were a criminal. They told her she already had passports and that they were cancelled. Citing state of emergency regulations, they refused to issue new passports.

Hakan Akel, who was worried about his own safety in Senegal, had to leave the country. He travelled to a third country on April 10, 2017 and sought asylum. His asylum process is ongoing, and his wife and children are stuck in Turkey. Because the asylum process usually takes a long time in the country in which he now resides, family reunion in the near future seems only a remote possibility.

The Bülbül family flew without passports

İbrahim Bülbül was the accountant at Yavuz Selim’s girls’ school, Sultan College. Two weeks after the July 15 coup attempt, a baby was born to his wife. Turkey’s embassy in Dakar would not issue a national ID card or a passport for the baby for eight months. On March 15, 2017, the embassy agreed to issue an ID but refused to issue a passport. The embassy later called İbrahim Bülbül, saying there was a problem with the ID given to the baby and invited the whole family to the embassy. When the family went to the embassy, all family members were asked to return their passports and IDs. But as they had heard on social media that the Turkish Embassy confiscates the passports of members of the Hizmet movement, they refused to comply and left the embassy. On October 5, 2017, they flew via a connecting flight without a passport for their baby and sought asylum in a European country.

No passport for baby Tekkılıç

The wife of Müslüm Tekkılıç, a Turkish language teacher at Yavuz Selim Bosphore College, had a baby on September 10, 2016. He was only able to obtain a national ID for his baby

half a year later, on March 15, 2017. The embassy refused to issue a passport. Like the Bül-büls, the Tekkılıç family was invited to the embassy and did not comply with the request to surrender all their passports. On October 5, 2017 they flew together with the Bül-bül family to seek asylum in a European country.

Şahin family fled to Europe

Sinan Şahin, an information technologies teacher at Yavuz Selim Bosphore College, told SCF about their experience with the Turkish Embassy: “My daughter Erva Leyla was born on February 10, 2017. When we went to the embassy to apply for an ID card, we were not even allowed to enter the building. They just gave us a form to fill out from behind the glass. They said they would first check whether we were eligible to apply for an ID. I filled out the form and returned it. On March 4, 2017, an ID card was issued, but not a passport. We were told they could not take any further action but that we would be contacted if there was any progress. I called the embassy every two weeks to check on the status of the passport application. Eventually they asked me not to call them again and said: ‘We cannot accept your passport application right now. We will get in touch with you if there is any progress.’ On October 5, 2017 we went to a European country with some other families and sought asylum.”

Current Situation

Because the Bosphore College building and the educational equipment of all schools were purchased by the French Horizon company, Turkey’s Maarif Foundation was not able to take over the schools. As a result Maarif has opened three new schools and appealed to the court to confiscate the Gülen movement schools. The judicial process has not yet been concluded.⁵⁴

The Maarif Foundation’s Senegal coordinator, Dursun Sarı, said they had been working hard to close the schools linked to the Gülen movement or take them over. “The Maarif Foundation started the legal process in December 2016, and by September 2017 the Senegalese government had cancelled the education license of the FETÖ schools. The legal process for handing over the schools to the Maarif Foundation is ongoing.”⁵⁵

Senegal’s Ministry of Education announced that the pro-Erdogan Maarif Foundation is allowed to continue its educational activities in Senegal.

54] “Senegal’de FETÖ’nün beli kırıldı”, Anadolu Ajansı, 11 December 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/senegalde-fetonun-beli-kirildi/1000802>

55] “TMV, Senegal’de yeni yıla yeni yüzle giriyor”, Yeni Haber, 31 December 2017, <http://www.yenihaberden.com/tmv-senegalde-yeni-yila-yeni-yuzle-giriyor-354230h.htm>

Participants of the Hizmet movement in Senegal left the country and have been seeking asylum in democratic countries where human rights are respected. The last teacher left Senegal on October 17, 2017.

Ahmet Arslan, Turkey's minister of transportation, maritime affairs and communications, expressed his gratitude for the developments while visiting Dakar on December 11, 2017.⁵⁶ Arslan said: "Thanks to recent improvements in the relationship between Turkey and Senegal, the schools of the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization [FETÖ] in this West African country sustained a blow. The FETÖ schools in Senegal have been permanently shut down. The relationship between Senegal's president, Macky Sall, and our president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is very good. Here, the people have great sympathy for Turkey as well. Both leaders showed their mutual resolve against FETÖ. Most FETÖ members understood they could no longer operate in this country. It has been reported to us that they left the country. In the aftermath of the July 15 coup attempt, Senegal has lent us considerable support and backed this up. Eventually, all the FETÖ schools in Senegal were shut down." Arslan added that the Hizmet movement used to have 12 schools and 2,500 students in Senegal.

Turkish Prime Minister Yıldırım met with President Macky Sall in Senegal while flying to another country on December 15, 2017. Yıldırım thanked Sall for closing down the schools linked to the Gülen movement in Senegal.⁵⁷

Many Senegalese students are worried about attending schools established by a foundation backed by the AKP, which has close ties to extremist Islamist movements instead of Gülen-affiliated schools that are guided by the principles of anti-violence, anti-extremism and peaceful coexistence.⁵⁸ A parent, Oury Mbaye, commenting on the possibility of the handover of her child's school, said: "I don't even know who Gülen or [Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdoğan are. If they are imposing a school administration that has no experience in education on me, I will transfer my children to a French school. I did not choose Maarif, and they won't be able to impose anything on me."⁵⁹

56] "Senegal'de FETÖ'nün beli kırıldı", Anadolu Ajansı, 11 December 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/senegalde-fetonun-beli-kirildi/1000802>

57] "Yıldırım, Senegal Cumhurbaşkanı ile görüşti", Milliyet, 16 December 2017, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yildirim-senegal-cumhurbaskani-siyaset-2573522/>

58] "Senegalese Students Worried Over Transfer Of Gülen-Affiliated Schools To Turkey's Islamist Maarif Foundation", stockholmcf.org, 11 December 2017, <https://stockholmcf.org/senegalese-students-worried-that-gulen-affiliated-schools-to-transfer-islamist-maarif-foundation/>

59] Ibid.

Conclusion

The Senegal case presents new insights into the modus operandi of Erdoğan's "long arm" abroad. While operating via Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs and UETD in Europe, the Erdoğan regime achieves its goals through methods such as abductions in Asian countries like Malaysia and Pakistan. In these countries, in addition to mutual interests, shared ideological tendencies have been a factor in securing support for restrictive actions targeting Turkish dissidents. On the other hand, in Africa, especially in underdeveloped countries, the Erdoğan regime has been successfully playing the financial aid card by luring its counterparts into abusive practices. After resisting for three years, Senegal jumped on Erdoğan's bandwagon largely thanks to promises of 7.5 million euros in financial aid and investment.

Another tactic of the Erdogan regime employed in Senegal was appointing semi-official Turkish personnel, apparently to engage in clandestine operations against dissidents, under the guise of "extra embassy personnel." Given the lawlessness and aggressiveness of Turkish intelligence operations abroad especially since the July 15 coup attempt, some educators who had to leave Senegal suspect the increased incidents of theft can be traced back to the "extra personnel" at the Embassy of Turkey. They point to the fact that no such incidents occurred before these mysterious people joined Turkish Embassy.

As a result of Turkey's relentless pressure, the Senegalese government eventually let its guard down and joined Erdoğan's global witch-hunt against the Gülen movement in exchange for financial aid, investments and possibly other favors. Movement entrepreneurs and volunteers who have been involved with education and charity in Senegal for almost 20 years, since 1998, have been totally uprooted from the country. Despite serious shortcomings in the area of education, the Senegalese government shut down some of the most successful private schools in Senegal as if they were criminal organizations. Among the 2,600 students of Yavuz Selim schools were children of several Senegalese government ministers including Monsieur Sidiki Kaba, minister of justice; Monsieur Serigne Thiam, minister of education; Monsieur Thierno Alassane Sall, minister of energy and development; Monsieur Oumar Gueye, minister of fisheries and maritime economy; Madame Mariama Sarr, minister for women; Monsieur Abdoul Aziz Tall, minister in charge of monitoring the Emerging Senegal Plan and Monsieur Cheikh Sadibou Diop, former minister of finance as well as high-ranking bureaucrats, prominent businessmen and others.

The schools collected 70 medals in the last nine years at Senegal's national science competition, Concours Général. They ranked first in the central exam for university entrance administered by Senegal's higher education institution, the Office du Baccalauréat. In the last five years the schools have earned 148 citations. Senegal's President Macky Sall awarded Alioune Badara Ndiaye, a student at Yavuz Selim Bosphore College in Dakar, first prize

at the 2016 Concours General national science competition. The Yavuz Selim schools achieved unprecedented success for Senegal with four gold, three silver and three bronze medals in the International Science Olympiads.

Despite the numerous contributions of the Gülen movement to education and the economy in Senegal, Erdoğan's long arm reached Dakar. The schools signs were removed. Ninety Turkish teachers, entrepreneurs and their families had to go through a terrible process. Educators lost their jobs, income and legal residence, leaving them without a choice other than to seek asylum in other countries. Those who returned to Turkey were arrested. Those who stayed faced the risk of abduction or extradition. Families were separated. Many suffer from mental health problems.

The Turkish Embassy in Senegal, like other diplomatic missions of Turkey abroad, has refused to provide crucial consular services to Turkish citizens blacklisted as Gülenist. Some families were not able to get passports for their newborn babies. They were asked to surrender their Turkish passports to the embassy to prevent any attempt to leave the country. Some passports were cancelled. Because the work permits of the teachers were revoked by Senegalese authorities, educators were generally not able to get a visa from other countries. Many teachers used connecting flights and sought refuge in the airports of safe third countries. As of October 2017, no Turkish teacher from the Gülen movement was left in Senegal.

Under orders from Ankara, Turkish diplomats have turned into man-hunters abroad, getting involved in activities totally contradicting their main mission as defined by the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations: "Protecting in the receiving State the interests of the sending State and of its nationals, within the limits permitted by international law." However, by means of its diplomatic missions, the Republic of Turkey is targeting a social group whose members are Turkish citizens by harassing them, limiting their right to live normal lives, making it a struggle to survive and putting them in harm's way. Again, according to the Vienna Convention, diplomatic missions must respect the laws of the host countries and not intervene in their domestic affairs. Despite this, Turkish diplomatic missions in many countries are accused of intervening in the domestic politics of their respective countries and involvement in activities that do not comport with diplomatic courtesy.

The mistreatment of educators, entrepreneurs and volunteers in Senegal which Turkish government arbitrarily declared terrorists for political reasons proves operating in nations with weak democratic credentials can be unpredictable and dangerous. As two nation-states, Senegal and Turkey have combined their powers to make life difficult, if not impossible, for individuals who have no criminal history. Legal remedies were not immediately available for the victims in Senegal. By revoking the educators' work permits

(Senegal) and denying them passports (Turkey), the two states have effectively forced victims from the Gülen movement to seek asylum abroad or face dire consequences in Senegal or Turkey.

The Turkish government led by President Erdogan has been systematically abusing global system, often acting in defiance of international law and universal norms to go after dissidents, especially those from a Gülenist background, at home and abroad. So far, thousands have been victimized by Turkey's relentless global witch-hunt with the help of several friendly nations, such as Senegal.

The international community must devise more effective mechanisms to prevent such abuse by nation-states and help victims in a timely and meaningful way. Advanced democracies and international organizations should be more willing to tackle the humanitarian crisis caused by Turkey's aggressive behavior around the world.

The United Nations Human Rights Commission, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and other relevant international institutions can draft special reports and exert pressure on Turkey and its international collaborators such as Senegal.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) can take a more assertive stance against member-state Turkey's abusive behavior. The Erdogan regime's worldwide witch-hunt also deserves more attention from the international media, intelligence and human rights monitors.

Turkey is a member of NATO, a military alliance established to defend democracies. Turkey's military allies should not turn a blind eye to the autocratic transformation of the country, contrary to NATO's founding principles.

The United States, the European Union and some nation-states in Europe such as Germany and France enjoy special political and economic leverage over Turkey. Turkey's vulnerable economy largely relies on foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade with Europe. The Erdogan regime claims they have not abandoned EU membership aspirations. Political criteria for EU membership include respect for the rule of law and human rights, which Ankara has recently been undermining. Turkey also values its relationship with the United States due to crucial military and strategic ties. Such ties cannot be advanced or preserved at the expense of democracy and human rights.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) should stop giving the benefit of the doubt to Ankara in many legal cases and rejecting perfectly legitimate human rights cas-

es as if an independent judiciary and domestic legal remedies still exist in Turkey. Holding Ankara accountable for the brutal purge at home and abroad clearly falls under the ECtHR mandate.

The Turkish government's systematic persecution targeting large numbers of people from different backgrounds such as Kurds, Alevi and Gülenists might lead to social and political unrest inside and outside of Turkey. Turkey's democratic friends and allies must treat the authoritarian trajectory with a sense of urgency and responsibility and devise strategies to deal with the crisis. Given the need for a democratic and stable Turkey, and for the sake of regional and global peace, it's high time responsible actors in the international community stand up against, or persuade, the new regime led exclusively by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.



ERDOĞAN'S LONG ARM: THE CASE OF **SENEGAL**

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