

Our Invitation to Give Advice and Reform

Osama bin Laden

April 12, 1994

[Please note: Images may have been removed from this document. Page numbers may have been added.]

Our Invitation to Give Advice and Reform

(TN: The author offers his salutations and makes a few references to the Quran before beginning the statement).

To King Fahd Bin ‘Abd-al- ‘Aziz al-Sa’ud, of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and to the people of the Saudi Arabian peninsula- Peace Be with You and God’s Blessings and Mercy,

On several occasions you have asked us to return to the country, expressing this request with great insistence. You have used a number of methods and ways to get the message across.

God only knows how much we miss our homeland, and there is no other country that we long for. How could this not be true, given that it is the cradle of Islam and the source of the word (TN: of the Prophet). It is also the birthplace of the Prophet and his childhood home.

However, the past and present situation, along with the connected events, have convinced us that it is necessary for us to remain in exile, knowing full well what is behind your desire.

We do not say this because of our suspicion or because we think ill of your intentions; however, actions and events have forced us to think hard about returning. Just to list a few of the actions to which we are referring: we were prevented from traveling. Our money was frozen in foreign bank accounts, a defamation campaign was waged against us in the local and international press, and finally, you attempted to cut our ties with the homeland by confiscating our passports. Your actions indicate to us what your intentions are for us.

However, all these matters are of little importance since they are of a personal nature, and the discord between us involves issues of concern that are important and involve the whole Ummah (TN: the Muslim community or nation).

In our first statement, we promised that we would address this situation. The fulfillment of our promise comes in this statement. We have done justice to those who deserve it and harm to those who have done harm.

We will summarize the issues briefly and without long-winded details, and we will explain matters in more details in subsequent statements, God willing.

First, on more than one occasion, our religious scholars have advised you to lay off those actions that have involved breaking rules and committing crimes that run against God's law.

However, all you have done in response is mock us, stonewall us, and refuse to take appropriate actions to remedy the situation. Your actions did not end at that—you have committed greater transgressions in the land of God and religion. Hence it is not possible to remain silent.

A group of Ulema who have had enough with corruption have begun calling for reform, and they have submitted numerous petitions. Intellectuals, academics, business people and former government officials have joined them. All of these people have submitted a number of appeals for reform. In the year 1411—Lunar calendar—a petition was submitted, during the Gulf war, which was signed by close to 400 people, calling for reform and end to injustice. But you ignored their advice and ridiculed them, and conditions continued to deteriorate further.

By 1413, these reformers had not given up. Then came back and submitted additional petitions. One of the petitions forwarded to the government identified the country's ailments and the necessary cures. The petition outlined deviations from the Shari'ah, the failures of the regime, the major flaws of the government, and the suffering of the Ulema, who have been marginalized and persecuted.

The aforementioned petition discussed the flaws in the media which has become a tool to glorify and deify individuals. The media is an instrument used to alter and falsify the facts, to attack and defame good people, and to falsely decry injustice against the Ummah. All of this is done without taking the appropriate actions.

People's rights have been abrogated; the administration of the country has continued to deteriorate. And corruption continues to infest governmental agencies.

The monetary and economic situation continues to worsen. The future looks bleak, in light of the huge debts that have burdened the country. These debts are the result of the personal wastefulness of government officials. All of this occurring at a time when taxes have risen and people are being more frugal in order to deal with what has taken place.

I have discussed the contemptible social situation in the country, which have recently become critically dangerous. I am especially concerned with the water service, because water is the most important element of life.

I also reviewed the condition of the armed forces. The Gulf crisis revealed the lack of preparedness, the need for troops, and the ineptitude of its leadership. All of these shortcomings exist in spite of the astronomical amounts that have been spent on the military.

The petition also discussed the condition of the judicial system, where shari'ah law has been suspended; it has been replaced by temporary laws.

As for the foreign policy of the country, the petition highlighted the delinquency and carelessness with which it is managed. In fact, it said that the country's foreign policy actually

works against the interests of Muslims, citing as examples support for the Gaza and Jericho agreement, Algeria, and many more.

It is known that these temporary laws or policies have resulted in support for the infidels. Also, this behavior is against Islamic law. This has been stated by the Ulema, among them the late Shaykh Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab—May God Rest His Soul.

The aforementioned petition raised these issues in a king, clear and honest fashion. Giving advice to those who govern is a necessary requirement in Islam, but that all of this has not helped. The petition resulted in ridicule for those who endorsed it and sympathized with its cause.

Those who wanted reform have continued their efforts. They formed the “committee for the defense of legitimate rights,” with the intent of supporting justice. However, the committee was received in an even worse fashion.

All of this has occurred with the blessing of government officials. These officials have implemented policies of obscurantism and opposition to reform. Among the Ulema, those who refused to be co-opted or corrupted have been isolated. As for the committees, they have been co-opted or incorporated, and they have become arms of the regime. These committees have issued declarations and statements similar in character to those issued by the government.

These committees have given the public every reason to withhold their trust from them. Yet these committees have dared to ask the public to withhold their trust from those who deserve it, such as scholars and preachers.

Second, the current situation is characterized by the corruption of the Shari’ah, the spread of evil. The restriction of worship, and the waging of war against just people who are hunted at home and abroad. In fulfillment of our promises and advisory duties, we would like to announce the arrival of our brothers and scholars into the country. They will offer knowledgeable advice, and they will ban all prohibited activities. We are all a part of the call to Islam, and we will unite in our efforts to achieve a common goal.

As a result of the current state of affairs in the country, we continue to insist that you abide by the requests of the committee of legitimate rights and all other legitimate requests.

It is not possible for us to work from within due to the terrorism and pervasive fear. From our position here and in consultation with our brothers in the Arabian Peninsula, we have established the committee for advice and reform.

Finally, we ask God the Almighty to bless the Ummah in this righteous task. May God strengthen its obedience, break its disobedience, increase its knowledge, and keep it from all that is reprehensible. We also ask God to bring us goodness and ward off evil.

(TN: The author ends with a quote from the Quran, which states “God will not change a people unless they do so for themselves.”)

Thanks be to God.

Dated 2/11/1414 AH

Corresponding to 12 April 1994 AD

Courtesy of Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point
Ctc.usma.edu