

Periodical Review: Fatwas – March 2011

The following report sets out the main Fatwas published on March 2011 in the “Minbar Al-Tawhid wal-Jihad” website, which belongs to the Salafist ideologue, Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi.¹ The surfers' questions are answered by the “Website's Sharia Committee” which includes a number of prominent Salafist sheikhs.



The Fatwas published over the past month dealt with a broad range of topics and areas including the demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt and rulings regarding the demonstrations in Libya, Morocco and the Gulf countries. Furthermore, the committee members were asked about the legitimacy of the terrorist attacks against the Christian church in Alexandria on early January 2011, as well as about harming innocent people in terrorist attacks in Iraq.

The screenshot shows a web interface for a fatwa chat room. At the top, there is a header with the website's name in Arabic and English, and a search bar. Below the header, there is a main content area with a search bar and a list of questions and answers. The questions are in Arabic and the answers are in English. The sidebar on the right contains navigation links for different sections of the website.

The Fatwas chat room on the website

¹ <http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/>

Sheikh Abu Al-Mundhir Al-Shanqiti

- Sheikh Abu Al-Mundhir Al-Shanqiti was asked by a surfer from Egypt regarding the duty of the Egyptian people with regards to Libya and whether people advocating Jihad in Egypt should go to Libya as individuals and fight with the rebels to bring down Gaddafi's regime despite the anarchy there and the lack of an Islamic banner or an Islamic organization. The Sheikh replied that it is the duty of every able man to leave for the border with Libya in order to see what is going on, to learn what type of aid is required by the brothers in Libya and then to give all he can.

As for taking part in the fighting, he explained that, in light of the events, it is clear that the Libyan Jihad against Gaddafi does not require more men as all of the people joined to that end but there is someone to greet the volunteers and tell them which theaters to go to, as such blessed Jihad must not be abandoned. The Sheikh noted that the issue of rallying under an Islamic banner is a matter meant to thwart the Jihad and does not exist in Islamic law. The meaning of an Islamic banner is fighting for Allah and for elevating Allah's words. Any Jihad meant to spread Islam is under an Islamic banner. The Libyan people are waging a defensive Jihad campaign against the bloodthirsty Gaddafi. The fact that the people are not rallying under the slogan of implementing Islamic law does not strip them of their right instilled in the Sharia to wage defensive Jihad. He summarized by stating that the key issue is to depose the tyrannical regime and only later will the preaching for establishing an Islamic regime and implementing Allah's law begin.²

- A surfer from Libya mentioned to Sheikh Abu Al-Mundhir Al-Shanqiti that following the fall of the eastern region in Libya to the people's hands, many

² http://tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4408

have “emptied” the security and military headquarters of the Libyan government, as well as looted foreign companies. He wished to know whether that would constitute stolen property and plundering public funds. In response, the Sheikh congratulated their struggle and explained that he cannot give an unequivocal answer as he is not knowledgeable enough with the events in Libya. His answer was, therefore, general; no public institution providing services to the people, such as educational institutions, health institutions *etc.* should be looted. However, there is no reason not to loot institutions serving the tyrant and expressing his opinion. The reason for this is that the tyrant is squandering the Muslims' funds on these institutions with the aim of spreading corruption and therefore Muslims are permitted to reclaim these funds whenever they can. Looting these institutions taunt the tyrant, undermining his foundations, stressing his weakness and inflaming the public to go out against him.

The Sheikh further explained that, after the downfall of the regime, these institutions should be viewed as serving the people and not the regime and therefore any attack on them is an attack on the public's property and funds. After the government's downfall, no foreign institution the Libyan economy relies upon may be attacked as attacking such institutions constitutes an attack on the people's interests. Therefore, one should take care not to harm public property in regions that are no longer under Gaddafi's control.³

- Sheikh Abu Al-Mundhir Al-Shanqiti was asked whether the West's intervention in Libya is permitted according to the Sharia. He explained that the “brothers in Libya” are facing the aggression of a barbaric blood-shedding regime, known for its heinous acts meant to preserve its power. The defense of the

³ http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4352&pageqa=1&i

Libyan cities against the government's cruelty should not be taken lightly, even if it requires receiving aid from heretics. This is a necessity permitting such actions. People facing annihilation must welcome anything that may help them, even if it is support received from an enemy. On more than one occasion, politics required an enemy to help its opponent. He mentions Sallah Al-Din's aid given to king Richard the Lion heart as an example.

The Sheikh also noted that so far the aid given by NATO forces was limited to attacking Gaddafi's forces without any land invasion and this is to the benefit of the rebels. He sees no harm in having the Muslims' enemy attacking another enemy to stop his evil and explained that the West does not wish to settle down in Libya, despite the fact it has certain reasons and interests which brought about its intervention. He concluded by stating that first and foremost Gaddafi's tyranny must be put to an end and afterward the West's hidden aspirations will surely be unveiled and confronted. If the rebels are able to defend the people from the tyrant's weapons in any manner possible, then they must not receive the support of the West, but if the opposite is the case, then it is a necessity. Being aided by the West does not negate the fact that it is hostile to the nation as it is killing Muslims in Afghanistan and Iraq and defending the Jews in Palestine.⁴

- Sheikh Abu Al-Mundhir Al-Shanqiti was asked by a surfer, apparently from Morocco, whether it is permitted to demonstrate in Morocco along with left wing elements. The Sheikh replied that these demonstrations are a golden opportunity to be rid of the tyrannical governments that changed Islamic Sharia, enslaved the country to the "enemies of Allah", corrupted it and stolen its resources. He noted that these are popular demonstrations carried out by

⁴ http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4508&pageqa=1&i=2

people from all walks of life, from all social components and ideological and religious beliefs. The Sheikh mentioned a previous answered to a similar question in which he explained that it makes no difference if some demonstrators demand to instill democracy, as the joint goal is to bring down the government. After it is brought down, each group will operate in its own way to achieve its goals. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with various ideological movements having a prominent role in the demonstrations. Even though they deviate from the religion, it does not mean it is prohibited to collaborate with them for the obtaining of a legitimate goal. Collaboration for obtaining something good, justice and rights is anchored in the Quran.

That is why we see the Egyptian government trying to depict the revolution as being instigated by the Muslim Brotherhood and Gaddafi trying to portray the Libyan revolution as being instigated by Al-Qaeda, in an attempt by the two to eradicate the popular nature of these revolutions. For that same purpose, Gaddafi has tried to arouse jealousy between the tribes and divide Libya into east and west. For that reason, ideological, ethnic or class differences should not be made prominent in these popular demonstrations. In conclusion, he recommended that the "brothers in Morocco" be mindful not to arouse jealousy between the Arabs and the Berbers, as the regime there may use it to divide the demonstrators.⁵

- Sheikh Abu Al-Mundhir Al-Shanqiti was asked by a surfer from Tunisia who is wanted by the security forces whether it is permitted to join an Islamic party such as "The Nahda Party" (The Renaissance Party) for receiving protection. The surfer notes that joining it is strictly a formality *I.e.*-receiving a member's card, without active participation in the partisan activity, in the elections and

5

http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4335&pageqa=1&i=&PHPSESSID=014cb6819ab766962cba528c122f4b83

the party's propaganda campaigns, except for activities that promote the truth, the belief in Tawhid (the Oneness of God) and the principle of loyalty and of fighting evil.

The Sheikh gave him permission to join the party until he is out of danger, after which he will have to resign. He noted that collaborating with this party in anything that is instilled in the Sharia is permissible if not done under its patronage. However, he warned that Tunisia is at an important crossroads, requiring those believing in the Oneness of God to focus on preaching and on adhering to the truth and keeping to the straight path. He also stressed that the Muslim Brotherhood has reached such a high stage of straying that they are walking the path of a secular movement. All of attempts to reconcile the Salafiya and the Muslim Brotherhood are futile, meant to disguise the straying of the Muslim Brotherhood and especially the straying of the "Al-Nahda" movement, whose leader, Rashid Al-Ghannushi, has greatly deviated from the ideology.⁶

- Sheikh Abu Al-Mundhir Al-Shanqiti was asked by a surfer who stated he will soon be leaving for Jihad, whether it is permitted to participate in the demonstrations in Saudi-Arabia and whether it is mandatory. He asked how he should behave if heretic slogans such as "a constitutional monarchy", "not Sunni, not Shiite, we are national" are heard and whether it is permitted to kill security personnel. The Sheikh ruled that anything that may bring down tyrannical regimes or limit their influence is considered a duty that one cannot be negligent about. Otherwise, the person may be deemed as betraying his religion, his nation and himself. Saudi-Arabia is no different than other Islamic countries in the matter of oppressing the people and serving Western

⁶ http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4321

interests. The Saudi regime is even worse than Gaddafi's, as Gaddafi did not allow the Americans to enter the region, conquer Muslim countries and kill Muslims, while the Saudi regime kept on safeguarding Western interests even after the fall of the tyrannical regimes. The downfall of the Saudi regime will bring about an American retreat from the region and will also help the Muslims in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Chechnya.

The Sheikh also urged Muslims to join demonstrations at all costs, even when family members oppose it, though they must not be confronted on the matter. The Sheikh also explained it is forbidden to participate in demonstrations calling out heretic slogans, such as "a civil and not a religious state" or "religion for Allah and the homeland for everyone", but if the slogans are slogans contradicting the Sharia such as "our journey is a national one" it is permitted to take part in these demonstrations as these slogans reflect the variety of opinions within the people, although one must not mingle with them and hold a separate removed gathering, where slogans in the spirit of the Sharia are called.

The Sheikh wished for demonstrations similar to those held in Jordan. The Sheikh also asked that the quiet nature of the demonstrations be kept and explained that a security officer protecting the tyrants is not the target, but the tyrant himself is. If a Jihadist group will kill these tyrants in an organized fashion, then it is not wrong to fight anyone helping and protecting them. According to him, a confrontation with the regimes and armies in an individual manner is useless.⁷

- A surfer told Sheikh Abu Al-Mundhir Al-Shanqiti that many have begun to listen to talks that the revolutions around the Arab world are silent revolutions

7

http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4421&pageqa=2&i=&PHPSESSID=1929f230de83971b3b8949c098cbf229

that do not use the violence, weapons and bloodshed employed by the Mujahideen. These talks are also heard on Friday sermons. He asked for his opinion on the matter. The Sheikh replied that the success of the peaceful protests is not necessarily a constant and it does not mean the path of force is ineffective because if the peaceful path has succeeded in bringing about change, the armed force path will surely bring about change. He admitted that the revolutions were indeed peaceful, but stressed that many demonstrators did use force against the police and set fire to police stations and government buildings in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. They did not use the force of weapons, but rather the force of sheer numbers.

The Sheikh justified the Mujahideen's revolt against these regimes for over 20 years in response to their heresy, secession from the religion, cruelty and corruption. He condemned all those believing in change in a non-violent manner and claimed they have been demonstrating against these governments for decades without achieving anything. Change began when the masses became determined to topple these regimes after having learned that they can succeed following the lessons learned in Tunisia. The determination and strong desire for change is what caused the Mujahideen to raise arms and rebel against these governments. The difference between the Mujahideen and the others is that the Mujahideen obey only the Sharia. They rise when the Sharia commands it and they refrain when the Sharia forbids it. The others, on the other hand, obey the democracy.

The Sheikh rejected the preachers advocating against armed Jihad and stated that the Sharia commands change to be made in any manner that is not prohibited; peacefully if possible, by force if necessary. Choosing the peaceful path as the only option and rejecting the use of force is in contradiction to the

nature of creation. The Islamic principle is based on permitting the killing of another if he is an aggressor and causes injustice.⁸

- Sheikh Abu Al-Mundhir Al-Shanqiti was asked whether it is permitted to go on a hunger strike until death when held captive by heretics or tyrants and replied that this is deemed suicide prohibited by Allah. It is permissible to go on a symbolic or partial hunger strike in a manner that does not bring about death or physical harm.⁹
- Sheikh Abu Al-Mundhir Al-Shanqiti was asked whether it is permitted to dye one's beard black and replied that based on Islamic sources, it is only permitted to dye hair that has turned gray into black.¹⁰

Sheikh Abu Muslim Al-Jazairi

- A surfer mentioned the statements made by Egyptian clerics regarding a referendum for approving changes in the Egyptian constitution. The majority of them permitted the voting but some stated that it is mandatory to vote on March 19th 2011. He asked whether voting constitutes an acknowledgment of the democratic regime opposing Islam or whether it is a vote against the greatest hazard of all, *I.e.*- a vote on changing the emergency legislation in Egypt. The surfer also mentioned that he sought the advice of an elder from the Islamic Group in Egypt who has served many years in jail, who advised him not to vote as Islamic law is the main source of legislation. Sheikh Abu Muslim Al-Jazairi replied that the referendum should be boycotted. The Egyptian people have to declare they are in favor of changing the constitution in its entirety and not only parts of it, so that it is declared that the only

8

http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4411&pageqa=1&i=&PHPSESSID=e9488ff57973299cdab33d386f7c9e0e

⁹ http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4115&pageqa=2&i=

¹⁰ http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4194

source of legislation is Islam. He rejected the arguments permitting participation in the referendum, especially those given by the Salafist movement and asked whether the matter was examined by them from a religious aspect or whether they are operating from a narrow partisan interest, like the "Muslim Brotherhood" in order to placate the government and demonstrate they are a new Salafist movement.

The argument regarding removing the emergency laws is misleading, as this law will not change in itself and only its title will change to an Anti-Terrorism Law that will be dedicated to restricting those advocating justice. He stressed that the foundations on which the Egyptian constitution is based are null and unacceptable, as the constitution declares that Islam is the main source of legislation, meaning there are other sources and this is unacceptable as Islam is the only source of legislation.¹¹

- Sheikh Abu Muslim Al-Jazairi was asked about the detonation of a car bomb on early January 2011 in front of a church in Alexandria, Egypt, causing the death of many Christians and instilling fear in their hearts. The surfer pointed out that the attack was condemned by Muslim clerics in Egypt who made a point of stating that the Christians are protected and that Islam forbids harming them. He asked the Sheikh to settle the matter and explain whether such an attack on Christians is a Muslim duty. The Sheikh replied that the clerics which condemned the attack turned out, thanks to the revolution in Egypt, to be false and not people of justice. Therefore, even their statements claiming Christians are under protection are refuted. They even went on to claim that Christians are equal to Muslims and even granted them the right to present their candidacy for the role of President. The Sheikh mentioned the

¹¹ http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4439

statements of Abu Al-Mundhir Al-Shanqiti who said these Christians are not under protection as they do not qualify for this status.

Al-Jazairi added that it is not yet known who is behind the Alexandria bombings and stressed that the hostility the Christians experience in the Levant is in response to the hostility they show towards Muslims. Many of them collaborated with the American occupation in Iraq and their leaders were hostile to the Muslims in Egypt and therefore they must know that they must let the Muslims be and release the Muslim female prisoners incarcerated in their churches. In conclusion he urged Muslims to make every effort to bring about the release of the Muslim female prisoners in Egypt and to fight anyone who attacked them.¹²

- Sheikh Abu Muslim Al-Jazairi was asked how one should conduct oneself in the event Western armies and their allies enter Libya's territory; whether they should be attacked or should one wait until they bring down Gaddafi, whether they should be attacked even if they leave and is their intervention in bringing down Gaddafi considered an occupation of Libya that requires a Jihad in order to repel it. The Sheikh held more adamant view than that of Sheikh Abu Al-Mundhir Al-Shanqiti, who was asked a similar question (see above) and replied that he has already warned the Opposition's National Council in Libya against receiving the aid of heretics and stated that the youth's revolution in Libya has lost much due to "this heinous crime". The revolution lost its principles and its sovereignty to make decisions after Gaddafi is removed. He mentioned he has warned that a NATO intervention will be made in order to fulfill certain interests and wondered what the opposition has promised the heretic forces led by France in return for this intervention. He also mentioned

¹² http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4094

his warning against the presence of heretic forces whose aim is to provide logistical aid in preparation of an attack, as has eventually occurred. In fact, the enemies have entered the opposition's ranks and this explains the undermining of their achievements, while those who put their faith in Allah, achieved many victories. The Sheikh wondered who appointed the Council a representative of all the revolution's youth and authorized it to decide on a NATO intervention. He also dismissed talks that the intervention followed the Arab League's authorization and attacked it for its helplessness in caring for the nation. He called upon the opposition's Council in Libya to reveal the commitment it has given the enemy and called upon its officers to resign.

The Sheikh urged the revolution's youth to follow the path of Allah and to demand that the enemies retreat immediately. If the Council continues to adhere to its path, they must refute it and form an alternative council based on Allah's laws, whose purpose will be to implement Allah's laws. He explained that the goal is for them to be their own masters. He advised them to organize, set goals and trust in Allah. The Sheikh thanked the people of Egypt and Tunisia for their support of the Libyan people and bemoaned the fact that the government in Algeria has tightened its supervision on the joint border for fear the Algerian people will unite with the Libyans.¹³

- Sheikh Abu Muslim Al-Jazairi was asked by a surfer from Nigeria, in light of the upcoming presidential elections in the country, how he should behave, especially when Nigerian religious clerics stress that electing a president is every Nigerian Muslim's duty as a "heretic" must not lead the country. The Sheikh explained that the rulers of the Muslim world are a Western creation and are subject to Western instructions and implement Western laws. Nigeria

¹³ http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4476

is one of the countries richest in natural resources and yet is considered to be one of the poorest countries in the world because the "Zionist-Crusader Camp exploits, through its agents within Nigeria, the natural resources of our nation in Nigeria. If the Nigerian people desire dignity, they must know that this demand will not be fulfilled unless under the patronage of Islamic law...".

According to the Sheikh there is no difference between a Christian ruler and a ruler professing to be a Muslim, as both operate according to a Western agenda and in contradiction with Islamic Sharia. He called upon the Nigerian people to disavow any ruler which fails to implement the Sharia and protect it. The Sheikh reminded the readers that democracy contradicts Allah's decree and clarified that if the election results do not coincide with the West's wishes, it will not recognize them, as has already occurred in Algeria with the "Rescue Front" and in Gaza with HAMAS. He urged the Nigerian people not to allow the "Jewish-Crusading West" to exploit their weakness and poverty and to return to the source of their pride.

According to the Sheikh, the Nigerian people must study the Quran and the Prophet's way and be wary of the Sufi movement which is heretic and the creation of the rulers and people of the New Murji'ah school, depicting themselves as Salafists in order to mislead the nation. He also mentioned some by name. He urged Nigerian Muslims to follow the sheiks who adhere to the truth of the Islamic religion, such as the members of the Sharia Committee at the "Minbar Al-Tawhid wal-Jihad" website, *e.g.*- Muhammad Al-Maqdisi, or the sheiks of the Jihad residing near the borders, such as Sheikh Abu Yahya Al-Libi. Furthermore, he urged them to prepare for Jihad both

organizationally and militarily and concluded that there is no point in "Hanging hopes on groundless wishes".¹⁴

Sheikh Abu Humam Bakr bin Abd Al-Aziz Al-Athari

- Sheikh Abu Humam Bakr bin Abd Al-Aziz Al-Athari was asked about the participation in the referendum in Egypt; whether it is mandatory to boycott it or to participate and should the participant vote in favor. The Sheikh explained that the articles to be changed contradict Islamic law. The end does not justify the means, which are not for the sake of the religion. Therefore, he stated, it is forbidden to walk the path of those advocating democracy so that they agree to several things contained in Islamic law, but the true believers will get something that contradicts it.¹⁵
- A surfer from Egypt told Sheikh Abu Humam Bakr bin Abd Al-Aziz Al-Athari that the people in the country are confused as to the referendum, when the "Muslim Brotherhood" do not prevent participation in it, as well as other groups that have opposed taking part in political proceedings in the past, explaining that now the situation has changed. The surfer reminded the Sheikh that Christians and secularists object the amendments and wish to annul the clause in the constitution stating that Islam is the country's official religion. The Sheikh replied that one should not take part in it and explained that it is a religious duty to boycott such referendums as they are a characteristic of "the Democratic religion".¹⁶
- Sheikh Abu Humam Bakr bin Abd Al-Aziz Al-Athari was asked for his opinion on the demonstrations in Bahrain, especially in view of the fact that they are

¹⁴ http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4254&pageqa=2&i

¹⁵ http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4446

¹⁶ http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4443&pageqa=2&i

lead by Shiites. He responded by explaining that the situation in Bahrain is very different from that of other countries where revolutions occurred. According to him, the Sunnis in Bahrain are between a rock and a hard place; between the rulers who committed heresy against Allah and between the Shiites. In accordance with the tradition of the Prophet's sayings, one must not aid either side against the other.¹⁷

Sheikh Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi

- Sheikh Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi was asked by a surfer from Iraq whether it is permitted to work at the "Waqf" office or in its Investment Council. The Sheikh replied that the head of the office is Ahmed Abdul Ghafour Al-Samara'i, a heretic loyal to the crusaders and the Shiites, urging them to attack and fight the Mujahideen. He explained that the office belongs to the Shiite government in Iraq and Muslims must not work for it unless it is necessary and serves a crucial interest and unless the duties of that person are permitted for Muslims and do not harm Muslims and aid heretics.¹⁸
- A female surfer from Iraq mentioned the unstable security situation in the country and the many explosions and killings. She asked Sheikh Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi how do those perpetrating these acts claim that this is the path of Jihad and Islam. She asked how Islam permits the killing of people as, according to her, Jihad is a self defensive act aimed at defending the believers, not killing them. She also mentioned those who claim Islam is the religion of terrorism. The Sheikh replied that it is indeed forbidden to harm the blood, money and honor of a Muslim. The Mujahideen are commanded to fight the crusaders and all those helping them. Accusing the Mujahideen of

¹⁷ http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=4404&pageqa=2&i

¹⁸ http://www.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=3951

killing innocents is a false accusation. Depicting the Mujahideen as terrorists does not harm them as long as the terrorism is directed against the Jewish enemies of Allah, the Crusaders and those seceding from the religion. In conclusion he stressed that the Muslims must side with the Mujahideen and reject everything said against them by the enemies of Allah.¹⁹

¹⁹ http://mail.tawhed.ws/FAQ/display_question?qid=3860