



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مجلس علماء المسلمين الشيعة في أمريكا الشمالية The Council of Shia Muslim Scholars In North America

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An open letter, on behalf of the Council of Shia Muslim Scholars in North America, to:

- The ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Washington D.C.
- The Kingdom's permanent representative at the United Nations in New York

Regarding the Saudi statements directed at the Marjaeya (religious authority) inciting hatred and division between the Muslims

In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful

- His Excellency Adel A. Al-Jubeir, *Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Washington D.C.*
- The Honorable Khalid A. Al-Nafisee, *Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia at the United Nations in New York*

May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon both of you,

It is no secret from your Excellencies, nor from the remaining officials in the Saudi Arabian Kingdom, that the recent vile and inappropriate statements by Shaykh Al-Ureifi about the Shia Muslims, the Followers of Ahl-ul-Bayt and of the Prophet, and the Supreme Religious Authority of the Muslims, His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali al-Hussaini al-Sistani (may God prolong his life), during his speech on Friday the 15th of Muharram, and the despicable caricature in al-Watan Newspaper published on Monday the 22nd of Muharram have enraged the emotions and anger of every sound-minded and conscious individual – not to mention the Muslims among them, especially the followers of His Eminence worldwide. Our sole response to those acts is the words of the Exalted, “O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah, and speak upright words. He shall rectify your conduct for you and He shall forgive you your sins. Whoever obeys Allah and His Apostle has certainly achieved a great success.” (al-Quran 33:70-71). We address you as the representative of your Kingdom, which is honored by the Holy Ka’bah – a point of unity for all Muslims and those who pray, in this country. You also represent his Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, whose history is replete with initiatives to repair the rifts in the Arab and Muslim worlds and with issues pertaining to dialogue and interfaith relations.

The statements that have been made, and that continue to be made to this day, by the official religious pulpits of the Kingdom conflict with the initiatives and slogans aimed at promoting unity. Indeed, it is very difficult to imagine the possibility of separating an expression of opinion by someone in a position described as a religious authority from the official stance, particularly when al-Watan Newspaper is headed by one of the main figures of the ruling family, Prince Bandar Bin Khalid al-Faisal. In addition, Al-Ureifi is described as:

- A member of the board of trustees in the supreme body for Islamic media, affiliated with the Muslim World League.
- A member of the teaching body in King Saud University since 1413 AH and until today.
- A speaker at the Jami’ al-Bowardi in Riyadh since 1426 AH and until today.
- Having more than seven million copies of his works printed and distributed at nominal prices.

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We, at the Council of Shia Muslim Scholars in North America, in recognition of our religious and ethical responsibilities and charged with the weighty representation of the Muslims and believers, must perform our duty before Allah, the Exalted, in aiding the religion and its adherents, specifically the just Jurists who exert themselves and their lives to serve the true religion.

It is no secret from anyone that the individual who was attacked is one of the most notable among the contemporary Muslim scholars. He is the one toward whom millions of Muslim hearts gravitate and the one who has the respect and appreciation of many non-Muslims as well, all due to his elevated scholarly status and his historical positions which strengthen and preserve the unity of Muslims. These positions stemmed from his belief in unity as derived from the Exalted One's words, "Indeed this nation of yours is one, and I am your Lord. So worship Me." (al-Quran 21:92). He sees that dominating others, whether real or perceived, is a corruption of national unity as well as a simultaneous corruption of both the dominating and the dominated groups. He has always called for self-restraint, patience, and adherence to peace in order to avoid the heavy price of conflict, thereby driving the sectarian issues toward their Islamic and national horizons. His fatherly care, for all groups of the Iraqi people with their diverse religious, sectarian, and ethnic affiliations, and evidenced in his promotion for the cessation of sectarian bloodshed and driving the region towards safety at a time when more than one side was issuing verdicts for slaughter and the financing and smuggling of arms, is all due to principles he holds and an additional example of his generosity and blessings.

It is for these reasons that we are reaching out to your Excellencies in this letter, such that you may pass it along with trust and integrity to those whom you represent in the Kingdom. This is in the interest of ending the clear contradiction between the initiatives and efforts of his Majesty the King and the Kingdom, and these firebrand campaigns. Such campaigns plant hatred and enmity, acting only to increase the conflicts, wars and bloodshed among the Muslims. This will please the enemies and ill-intentioned ones, especially since it would not have been the first and doesn't seem to be the last time.

Consequently, and at minimum, we hope that the decision-makers in the Kingdom officially and religiously control these transgressions and attacks upon that which is sacred, due to their detrimental effects on Muslims. We are hopeful that these voices and unusual calls will be restrained and that all of the verdicts and opinions which cast doubt upon the people of the Qiblah and accuse them of disbelief without proof or evidence will stop. Then and only then, Muslims will be able to confront their true enemies. May Allah protect us and you and may He also direct our steps and yours. May He inspire us all to the path of rectitude and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you.

On behalf of:
The Executive Committee of the Council
23 Muharram 1431 AH

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