

US DEPARTEMENT OF STATE

Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism

[Country Reports on Terrorism 2016](#)

Report

TURKEY

Overview: Turkey continued its efforts to defeat terrorist organizations, including the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and ISIS. On August 24, the Government of Turkey launched a cross-border military operation, "Operation Euphrates Shield," in northern Syria, which Ankara described as an effort to remove ISIS threats along the Turkey-Syria border. Turkey remained an active contributor in international counterterrorism fora, including the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF).

Turkey is a source and transit country for foreign terrorist fighters wishing to join ISIS and other terrorist groups fighting in Syria and Iraq. The Government of Turkey continued efforts to interdict suspected foreign terrorist fighters including: expanding its "Banned from Entry List;" deploying Ministry of Interior "Risk Analysis Units" to detect suspected foreign terrorist fighters at airports, seaports, bus terminals, and border crossings; sending additional personnel to reinforce military and civilian border units; deploying combat and surveillance equipment; and enhancing physical security measures along the Turkey-Syria border. In some instances, Turkey cooperated with source countries on information sharing and building investigative, prosecutorial, and administrative capacity to interdict the travel of suspected foreign terrorist fighters.

Turkey is an active member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. It opened Incirlik Air Base and other sites to Coalition aircraft in support of counter-ISIS operations in Iraq and Syria. Turkey is a founding member of the GCTF, and served as its co-chair from September 2011 to April 2016. As the co-chair of the Coalition's Working Group on Foreign Terrorist Fighters with the Netherlands, Turkey hosted an international meeting of the working group in Antalya on October 26-27. Turkey also co-chairs the GCTF's Horn of Africa Capacity Building Working Group with the European Union (EU) and is a member of the Coalition's Working Group on Counter-ISIS Finance.

The PKK continued to conduct terrorist attacks in Turkey during 2016. Turkish National Police and military forces continued counterterrorism operations against the PKK in Turkey's southeastern provinces. According to Turkey's semi-official news agency, the Anadolu Agency, the government killed, wounded, or captured more than 8,000 PKK terrorists in operations since July 2015. More than 750 government security personnel died in PKK-attributed attacks during this timeframe.

The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons/Hawks (TAK), a PKK splinter group, increased terrorist attacks targeting security personnel, infrastructure, and tourism facilities. Attacks by the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C), a Marxist-Leninist terrorist group with anti-U.S. and anti-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) views that seeks the violent overthrow of the Turkish government, continued.

The Government of Turkey has domestically identified several organizations as terrorist groups, including Turkish Hizballah (no connection to Hizballah), the Communist Party of

Turkey/Marxist–Leninist (TKP/ML), and its armed wing, the Liberation Army of the Workers and Peasants of Turkey (TIKKO), as well as the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (MLKP). Turkey also considers the Syria-based Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its military wing, the People’s Protection Units (YPG), to be terrorist organizations closely linked to the PKK. The Government of Turkey continued to engage diplomatically with Hamas political bureau chief, Khaled Meshaal.

Turkey’s National Security Council designated the religious movement of self-exiled Islamic cleric Fethullah Gulen a terrorist organization on May 26, referring to it as the “Fethullah Terrorist Organization” (“FETO”). The government asserts that the Gulen movement planned and led the July 15 coup attempt, which killed more than 240 people and injured more than 2,100 people, and included attacks on the Parliament. The government instituted a three-month state of emergency on July 21, subsequently extending it another three months on October 19. According to government sources, as of November 22, more than 86,000 civil servants were dismissed from public service via government-issued state of emergency decrees following the coup attempt for their alleged affiliation with, or support of, “FETO.” As of October 8, authorities had arrested nearly 35,000 suspects on charges related to Gulen affiliation. The Gulf Cooperation Council designated “FETO” a terrorist organization on October 13. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation did the same on October 19.

2016 Terrorist Incidents: Notable attacks included:

- On January 12, 13 individuals, mostly foreign tourists, were killed and 14 individuals were injured in a suicide bombing in Istanbul’s central Sultanahmet district. Authorities attributed the attack to ISIS.
- On February 17, TAK conducted a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) attack near the General Staff Headquarters in Ankara, killing 29 people and wounding 61 people.
- On March 3, two DHKP-C militants attacked a police vehicle in Istanbul, wounding two officers.
- On March 13, TAK executed a suicide VBIED attack in Ankara’s central Kizilay district, killing 36 people and injuring 125 people.
- On March 19, four foreign tourists, including two U.S. citizens, were killed and 45 were injured, including 24 foreign nationals, in an ISIS suicide bombing in Istanbul.
- On June 28, 44 people were killed and 239 were wounded in an attack by ISIS suicide bombers at Istanbul’s Ataturk International Airport.
- On August 17, a PKK VBIED attack at a police station in Van province killed four people and wounded 72 people.
- On August 26, a PKK VBIED attack against a district police headquarters in Sirnak killed 11 people and wounded at least 70 people.
- On December 10, TAK claimed responsibility for a coordinated suicide VBIED and suicide bomber attack in Istanbul against police that killed 44 people and wounded more than 150 people.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Turkey has a broad definition of terrorism, to include crimes against constitutional order and internal and external security of the state, which is sometimes used to criminalize what the United States would consider the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression and assembly. Under Turkey’s Anti-Terror Law and penal code, a person can be punished as a member of a criminal or terrorist organization, even if the person is not a member of that organization, if the person commits an offense on

behalf of that organization. The legislation considers a member of an organization with terrorist aims as a terrorist offender, even if the person does not commit a crime. It imposes more severe sentences to terrorism offenses and terrorist propaganda involving mass media. Despite a 2013 amendment that narrowed the definition of terrorist propaganda to declarations that legitimize and laud the violent, coercive, and threatening methods of terrorist organizations and incite their use, authorities broadly interpreted counterterrorism laws to target political opponents, journalists, and activists. The government, for example, arrested Sebnem Korur Fincanci, President of the Human Rights Foundation, in June after she had served as a temporary guest editor of the pro-Kurdish newspaper *Ozgur Gundem*, on the charge of spreading terrorist propaganda. Her trial continued at year's end.

Following the July 15 coup attempt, the government on July 20 declared a three-month state of emergency, renewed in October, which allowed suspension of some due process protections for those accused of ties to terrorist groups. Courts imprisoned tens of thousands of persons accused of supporting the attempted coup or terrorist groups, in many cases with little clarity on the charges and evidence against them.

Turkey has advanced law enforcement capacity to counter terrorism and efforts continue to streamline interagency information sharing. Turkey devoted additional investigative and preventive capabilities to disrupt the activities of terrorist organizations and foreign terrorist fighters, and dismantle their facilitation networks. Turkish counterterrorism raids led to the death or capture of key ISIS operatives, including the head of an ISIS cell in Gaziantep province, who directed the Suruc (Sanliurfa) and Ankara train station attacks in 2015. According to Interior Ministry data, from January to November 23, 2016, authorities detained 3,089 individuals for links to ISIS, including 1,381 foreign nationals. It subsequently arrested 1,204 individuals, including 618 foreign nationals, of those detained.

Following the attempted coup in July, the government issued 12 decrees under the state of emergency to expedite investigations into offenses against constitutional order, which could include offenses committed during the coup attempt or beyond. The executive orders, among other measures, increased the period of custody for these offenses to 30 days from 48 hours, and also imposed procedural restraints that removed attorney-client privilege in terrorism-related cases.

The Ministry of Interior continued to regularly update its list of wanted terrorists. The list is posted publicly on its website as part of a government program launched in August 2015 that provides monetary rewards up to 4 million Turkish lira (approximately US \$1.3 million) to individuals who volunteer information leading to the capture of terrorist suspects.

To reduce instances of improvised explosive device use by terrorist organizations, the government on June 8 issued a temporary ban on the sale of ammonium nitrate (AN) fertilizers, a key component in these devices. On November 7, Prime Minister Yildirim announced that Turkey would gradually stop producing chemical fertilizers high in ammonium nitrate content. The Prime Ministry ordered additional point-of-sale measures to monitor and manage the sale and distribution of propane, camp, and industrial gas cylinders. These measures include the mandatory inscription of serial numbers and bar codes on cylinders, online tracking of the consumption process, mandatory registration of the end-user identity information, after-use recycling of gas cylinders, and tracking the entry and exit of liquefied petroleum gas cylinders.

As part of efforts to establish an integrated border management system, the government continued to centralize border management under the Ministry of Interior. On March 17, the government established three interagency structures: an Integrated Border Management Coordination Council led by the prime minister or a designated minister; a Border Management Implementation Council led by the undersecretary of the Interior Ministry; and a National Coordination and Joint Risk Analysis Center under the Interior Ministry's Directorate General of Provincial Administration.

The Government of Turkey continued to expand its "Banned from Entry List" to prevent travel into Turkey by foreign terrorist fighters. Risk Analysis Units continued to operate at major ports of entry and internal transit points to interdict potential foreign terrorist fighters. Security forces increased their ability to keep persons and contraband from crossing Turkey's borders. Turkey completed the construction of 270 kilometers of concrete wall along the key sections of the 911-kilometer Turkey-Syria border, and announced government tenders to complete the installation of a modular security wall along the balance of that border in the first half of 2017. According to Turkish General Staff data, during the January 1 to October 4 timeframe, Turkish Land Forces registered more than 33,300 border incidents, including the apprehension of approximately 300,000 individuals, mostly irregular migrants (who do not have the necessary paperwork/travel documents/authorizations to enter and work in Turkey), attempting to illegally cross Turkey's borders.

On August 24, Turkey launched a successful military campaign with Defeat-ISIS Coalition support around the northern Syrian city of Jarablus to secure its border against terrorist threats emanating from ISIS-controlled territory in Syria. The operation successfully pushed ISIS away from the last segment of the Syria-Turkey border it occupied and continued to extend further into ISIS-controlled territory at the end of 2016.

The U.S. government continued to provide bilateral and regional training programs in the areas of border, aviation, and sea-based security, and investigations, in partnership with Turkish law enforcement authorities and counterparts.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Turkey is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and an observer of the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, a FATF-style regional body. Turkey's financial intelligence unit, the Financial Crimes Investigation Board (MASAK) under the Ministry of Finance, is a member of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units. No terrorist finance cases were prosecuted in 2016.

Turkey's Council of Ministers responsively issues freezing orders regarding persons, institutions, and organizations listed by the UN Security Council (UNSC) ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qa'ida sanctions committee. Freezing orders are published in the Official Gazette, but it remains unclear whether the assets of any UNSC-designated entities were frozen in 2016. The non-profit sector is not reviewed on a regular basis for counterterrorist financing (CFT) vulnerabilities and does not receive adequate anti-money laundering/CFT outreach or guidance from the Turkish government. The General Director of Foundations issues licenses for charitable foundations and oversees them, but there are a limited number of auditors to cover the more than 5,500 foundations and 100,000 associations.

Turkey's CFT efforts, especially after the July 15 coup attempt, focused on disrupting the finances of the PKK and the "Fethullah Terrorist Organization," and included, among other

measures, closing or appointing trustees to companies and seizing properties affiliated with the Gulen movement, and freezing assets of businessmen suspected of Gulen links. A cash repatriation law enacted on August 3, which allows Turkish citizens and corporations to freely transfer and use currency, gold and other capital market instruments without undergoing investigation and prosecution as part of an economic stimulus package, raised concerns over its potential impact to create CFT vulnerabilities. Turkey identified and seized a significant amount of contraband goods, particularly along the Syria border, including oil, tobacco, illicit narcotics, and cultural artifacts, denying revenue to terrorist organizations.

The Department of State supported a Resident Legal Advisor (RLA) from the Department of Justice's Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development and Assistance Training, based in-country. The RLA partnered with Turkish counterparts on programs to enhance legal frameworks and the investigative skillsets of law enforcement officials to effectively counter the financing of terrorism.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2017 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm>.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Turkish National Police plays a significant role in preventing radicalization to violence by administering a community outreach program to vulnerable populations. Police undertake social projects, activities with parents, and in-service training for officers and teachers. Programs prepare medical, community, and religious officials to intervene to undermine violent extremist messages and to prevent terrorist recruitment. The Ministry of Justice implements rehabilitation and reintegration programs for convicts and former criminals.

Turkey's Religious Affairs Presidency (Diyanet), tied to the Prime Ministry, works to undermine violent extremist messaging by promoting a moderate and inclusive version of Islam. All Sunni imams in Turkey are employees of the Diyanet. On October 17, the Diyanet released a report entitled "Religious Exploitation and Terrorist Organization ISIS," which explores the causes of radicalization to violence, counters ISIS's ideology with theological concepts and religious references, and offers recommendations to counter violent extremism.

On May 11-12, Turkey hosted the inaugural Strong Cities Network Global Summit in Antalya, which brought together more than 200 delegations to share best practices as to how subnational municipal actors prevent violent extremism.

International and Regional Cooperation: Turkey is an active member of the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the Committee of Experts on Terrorism of the Council of Europe. Turkey is a founding member of the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law and provides expert support to assist training for judges and prosecutors who are handling terrorism cases. Turkey participates in Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) expert meetings on the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism organized by the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the OSCE Secretariat.

Turkey has bilateral security cooperation agreements with more than 70 countries. The Turkish National Police contributes to counterterrorism capacity-building programs of partner countries and offers specialized international law enforcement training. During the 1997-2016

timeframe, TNP provided training to approximately 26,000 law enforcement officials from more than 60 countries. Turkey's military has trained more than 30,000 foreign military personnel from 57 countries in a range of subjects, including counterterrorism operations.

As a GCTF member, Turkey partnered with the United States on two initiatives: (1) The Initiative to Address the Lifecycle of Radicalization to Violence, which aims to address the full life cycle of radicalization to violence: from prevention, to intervention, to rehabilitation and reintegration; and (2) The Protection of Soft Targets in a Counterterrorism Context Initiative, which aims to raise awareness, identify needs, and leverage experiences to better protect civilian infrastructure. Turkey hosted the inaugural Soft Target Initiative Summit in Antalya in December.