

## **Turkish Measures in Countering Terrorism (2022-2024)**

### **General Information**

PKK/PYD/YPG, DAESH, FETO, DHKP/C and other revolutionary leftist terrorist organizations have been the particular focus of Turkish counter-terrorism efforts during the reporting period.

### **Updates in the Legal System**

#### *Punishment of Terrorists Committing Attacks on Behalf of a Terrorist Organisation without Being a Member Thereof*

Türkiye punishes acts of terrorism through its Counter-Terrorism Code and Criminal Code. In 2023, the Turkish Constitutional Court rendered a decision, cancelling the norm which allowed the punishment as members of terrorist organisations of unaffiliated individuals who commit crimes on behalf of terrorist organisations. Instead, the Turkish Grand National Assembly passed a law in 2024 which has set a 2 to 6 years imprisonment term for those who commit terrorist acts on behalf of terrorist organisations, without being a member.

#### *Liability of Legal Persons*

Private legal persons (privately owned companies, associations, etc.) involved with several financial crime types, including terrorist financing, have administrative liability. The criminal court in charge of such cases has the power to instill administrative fines.

In 2023, a new bill was passed, allowing public legal persons (publicly owned companies, associations, etc.) to have the same liability as private legal persons.

#### *Nuclear Regulation*

Pursuant to the Nuclear Regulation Law No. 7381, dated March 5, 2022, activities involving nuclear energy and radiation, as well as the associated persons, facilities, devices, and materials, are subject to regulatory control for safety, security, and nuclear safeguards. Under this law, the Nuclear Regulatory Authority is responsible for key activities such as authorization, inspection, regulation, and sanction concerning the safety of nuclear and other radioactive materials and their related facilities. Additionally, the Presidential Decree No. 95, dated March 8, 2022, on the Organization and Duties of the Nuclear Regulatory Authority, sets out the procedures and principles regarding the establishment, operation, duties, authority, and

responsibilities, as well as the organization and personnel of the Nuclear Regulatory Authority.

To regulate the notification, determination, and monitoring of the inventory of nuclear materials used for peaceful purposes within the borders of Republic of Türkiye, as well as equipment and materials specially designed or prepared for the nuclear fuel cycle, and to prevent unauthorized use of these materials, or their conversion into nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, the procedures and principles within the framework of the national nuclear material accounting and control system established by the Authority are stipulated in the “Regulation on Nuclear Safeguards.” published in the Official Gazette on November 19, 2022, No. 32018.ilities, and radioactive materials.

**Conviction Numbers**

<b>Crime/Law (Counter Terrorism Law or Turkish Criminal Code)</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024 (As of May)</b>
Counter-Terrorism Law.	1,391	1,079	445
Disrupting the unity of the State and the integrity of the country	210	216	80
Violating the Constitution	211	251	191
Assassination attempt and physical attack to the President of the Republic	3	2	0
Crime against the government	8	0	1
Membership to a terrorist organisation	12,758	8,646	2,450
Providing weapons to terrorist organisations	40	37	5

**Countering Terrorist Financing**

Under the Law on the Prevention of Terrorist Financing, since October 2021 and as of April 2024, Türkiye has frozen the assets of 972 terrorists and entities. 181 of these actions were against DAESH and Al-Qaeda.

Under Resolution 1373 (2001), Türkiye has requested 46 Member States to freeze the assets of 179 individuals. So far, assets of 17 individuals have been frozen in 4 Member States.

In addition, Türkiye works with international partners to jointly freeze the assets of individuals. For example, an action to jointly freeze the assets of three individuals with the USA is ongoing.

Furthermore, Türkiye is attempting to list, jointly with the USA, 12 real and legal persons under the UN DAESH and Al Qaeda Sanctions List.

Any updates in the aforementioned list are quickly applied to the national list.

Information notes prepared on the use of virtual (crypto) assets by terrorist organisations and the studies prepared for their use were sent to the relevant units at various times. In-service trainings on countering the financing of terrorism are provided to the personnel of the Counter-Terrorism Department of Turkish National Police. Counter-Terrorism Department, in order to increase cooperation in the field of Financing of Terrorism, held the “Workshop on Countering the Financing of Terrorism” in 2022 and 2023 with stakeholders including MASAK Presidency (FIU in Türkiye), The Ministry of Justice, and Central Bank of the Republic in Türkiye.

Türkiye also delivered a presentation on the financing of DAESH presence in and around Afghanistan during the meeting of Global Coalition Against DAESH Counter DAESH Finance Group.

On terrorist financing, 122 individuals were arrested in 124 operations in 2023 and 39 individuals were arrested in 35 operations in 2024 as of May.

### **Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalisation**

Public Awareness and Prevention Activities (PPA) carried out by the Turkish National Police Counter Terrorism Department are aimed at preventing terrorist organisations from recruiting new members, ensuring the surrender of terrorists, raising public awareness of the terrorist activities, creating an opposing discourse against terrorist propaganda and preventing violent extremism. For this purpose, the activities in the field are categorised in three main groups: Public Awareness Activities, Social Activities and Activities with Families.

Through these activities 1,764,763 people were reached with 17,930 cases in 2022; 2,102,696 people were reached with 17,476 cases in 2023,

and 395,721 people were reached with 5,438 events in the first quarter of 2024.

Face-to-face and online conferences were held within the scope of the “Youth and Safe Future Project” in order to prevent terrorist recruitment especially in universities and high schools.

61% of the number of people reached within the scope of Public Awareness Activities in 2022 consisted of Information Stands, 28% of School Conferences, 7% of Public Conferences, 3% of Public Meetings, and 1% of Classroom Visits and Branch Visits.

72% of the number of people reached within the scope of Public Awareness Activities in 2023 consisted of Information Stands, 21% of School Conferences, 5% of Public Conferences and 2% of Public Meetings.

As of the first quarter of 2024, 32% of the number of people reached within the scope of public awareness activities were Information Stands, 64% were School Conferences, 2% were Public Conferences, 1% were Public Meetings and 1% were Class and Branch Visits. As of the first quarter of 2024, a total of 356,659 people were reached within the scope of Public Awareness Activities. These are extremely important in order to reach many people at once, to raise awareness of the whole society, especially young people, and to develop an opposing discourse against terrorist organisations.

### **Türkiye/CT Operations and Statistics**

In 2023, 99 terrorists were captured dead, 1,014 were captured alive, and 140 terrorists surrendered. 163 terrorist attacks were prevented and 154,017 pieces of weapons, IEDs and ammunition as well as 649 kilograms of explosive materials were seized.

In 2024, as of May, 2 terrorists were captured dead, 382 were captured alive and 33 surrendered on their own accord. 27 terrorist attacks were prevented, 25,638 pieces of weapons, IEDs and ammunition as well as 695 kilograms of explosive materials were seized.

In 2022, 16 security force members and 4 civilians were martyred, while 75 security force members and 9 civilians were wounded.

In contrast, in 2023, 11 security force members and 3 civilians were martyred, while 20 security force members and 6 civilians were wounded.

In 2024, 2 civilians were killed, while 4 civilians and 6 security force members were wounded.

### **Border Crossing**

Under Resolution 2178 (2014) of the UN Security Council, Member States must ensure that their borders are secure and that FTF travel is prevented. Türkiye physically controls its borders to efficiently halt terrorists' movement across borders as well as narcotics and smuggling which are major sources of terrorist financing.

When compared to 2022, number of terrorists captured by the Turkish Armed Forces during attempts to cross the border decreased by 27% in 2023.

In comparison with 2022, a decrease of 53% on smuggling cases proves the impact of the Physical Border Security System.

Since 2011, Türkiye has been preventing the travel of foreign terrorist fighters to the conflict zones, either through deportation of fighters found in Türkiye or through issuing entry bans to suspected fighters. Between 01.01.2022 and 02.05.2024, 1,177 individuals were deported. Between these dates, Türkiye issued entry bans on 8,992 individuals.

### **Terrorist Organisations Exploiting Religion**

Türkiye is the only NATO member that fought DAESH chest to chest in Iraq and Syria. Following DAESH's territorial defeat, the terrorist organisation shifted its presence to Afghanistan and Africa.

Terrorism has become ubiquitous in Africa, spreading to 11 countries. Since the beginning of 2024, each month has seen more and deadlier attacks.

IED use has become prevalent within Al-Qaeda affiliates. Furthermore, terrorist organisations has been actively increasing their technology use. For example, JNIM is known to use unmanned aerial systems for reconnaissance purposes or as weapons systems.

During the reporting period, DAESH targeted Türkiye in its propaganda. Turkish government continues to be labelled "taghut" by the terrorist organisation.

Operations continued against members of DAESH presence in and around Afghanistan. In 2023, 1500 operations were conducted against DAESH. 738 individuals were arrested and judicial measures were imposed on 650 individuals.

## **PKK/PYD/YPG Terrorist Organization**

PKK's ultimate goal is to establish a so-called "democratic autonomy" in the four-state area (Türkiye, Iran, Iraq, Syria). PKK considers Europe as a fifth part of this geographical structuring.

- *PKK* in Türkiye
- *PYD/YPG/"SDG"* in Syria
- *PJAK* in Iran
- *Tevgera Azadi* in Iraq
- *KCDK-E* in Europe

During reporting period, PKK terrorist organization maintained its armed activities in Syria and Iraq. whereas Europe has been the centre of propaganda and financing activities.

According to the Turkish Armed Forces, PKK/PYD/YPG continues to undermine the stability in Syria by attacking from Tel Rifat and Munbic on the West side of Euphrates and from Ayn al-Arab, Ayn Isa, Tel Tamir on the east side. There have been 757 attacks since 1 January 2022 (as of May 2024).

PKK exploits and radicalizes women. Women are generally used as suicide bombers. In the depositions of arrested/surrendered PKK members, we clearly see that women militants are exposed to sexual harassment within the PKK. Furthermore, PKK abuses minor girls. The findings of the Secretary General's latest report titled "Children and Armed Conflict" (5 June 2023) are testimony to this fact.

Due to successful operations against PKK in Türkiye, the terrorist organization is desperate to find new recruits elsewhere. Europe is one of the main sources of recruitment for the PKK. The terrorist organization allures new recruits with financial assistance and promise of obtaining residence permits in Europe. New recruits travel with fabricated documents from Europe to Northern Iraq after stopping by at some countries. The latest EUROPOL report also states that PKK members with EU citizenship or permanent residence in Member States travel to the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq to take part in conflicts. The same report points out the security risks pertaining to the return FTFs affiliated with the PKK terrorist organization. Foreign Terrorist Fighters joining

PKK/PYD/YPG in Syria and Iraq are largely mobilised by PKK/PYD/YPG's European network.

Like DAESH and Al Qaida, the PKK terrorist organization is also desperate to abuse technological advancements. "Global Report on the Acquisition, Weaponization, and Deployment of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) by Non-State Armed Groups for Terrorism-related Purposes Report" refers to "reverse engineering of UAVs" of terror groups in Türkiye. PKK uses unmanned aircrafts and paramotors against Türkiye. (Perpetrators of September 2022/Mersin and October Ankara/2023 terrorist attacks entered Türkiye from Syria with paramotor)

PKK/PYD/YPG has applied pressure and cruelty to the local population, consisting of Arabs and Turkmens, in the regions under its control. This way, the terrorist organisation forced the local populace to migrate, striving to change the demographic structure while collecting financing and recruiting terrorists. These acts against the Arab majority facilitates the expansion of DAESH's recruitment pool.

PKK/PYD/YPG continued to use the camps under its control housing DAESH affiliated individuals to pursue so-called legitimacy and terrorist financing. PKK/PYD/YPG has been collecting money to ransom off DAESH affiliated individuals, and letting foreign terrorist fighters leave these camps with the promise that an attack will be conducted against Türkiye.

Similar to DAESH, PKK/PYD/YPG sought to exploit devastating earthquakes in 6 February 2023 in Türkiye in terms of terrorist financing, particularly through crowdfunding method.

### **Revolutionary Leftist Terrorist Organisations**

Revolutionary leftist terrorist organisations such as DHKP-C and the components of the People's United Revolutionary Movement<sup>1</sup> (MLKP, MKP, TKP-ML, DKP/BÖG) and HBDH terrorist organisations kept targeting Türkiye during the reporting period.

On October 30, 2023, four members of the DHKP-C terrorist organisation equipped with bombs, weapons and ammunition were neutralised while attempting to illegally cross Türkiye from Greece. Two DHKP-C terrorists

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<sup>1</sup> PURM/HBDH: established on March 12, 2016 as an umbrella movement pioneered by the PKK

were neutralised during the terrorist attack on İstanbul Courthouse on 6 February 2024 where a civilian was killed by terrorists.

Moreover, revolutionary leftist terrorist organisations listed above continued their activities in north east of Syria with the arms and logistical support provided by PKK/PYD/YPG. Trying to create new space for themselves in Syria, they have concentrated to their camps in Ras Al-Ayn, Kobani, Hasakah, Tell Tamer and Qamishli. There are around 90-100 terrorists operating in the rural areas of Iraq, Syria, and Iran.

Members of HBDH and MLKP terrorist organisations operating in Europe were transferred to Iraq in groups of 1-2 people between January and March 2024, and after receiving training in camps, it is planned that these individuals will deploy to Türkiye through Syria or Iraq.

These organisations continue their strategic communications to radicalise individuals, including through disinformation. For example, HBDH has claimed responsibility for fires, sabotages, or natural events that has led to damage. Out of 117 actions claimed by this terrorist organisation, 104 were found to be untrue. Furthermore, these organisations continue to promote themselves in European Countries. These organisations exploit events such as 1 May Worker's Day to make black propaganda.