



Ms. Mette GJERSKOV
Chairperson
European Affairs Committee
Folketinget

Copenhagen, 29 January 2016

Dear Mr. Chairperson,

We live in times in which terrorism has become the common threat for global peace and stability. The world community unfortunately experiences situations that make everyone realize that terrorism does not have borders, nationality, religion etc. Nobody's terrorist could be and should be a good one for the other as it is a major violation of the fundamental human right, the right of life, among others.

It is worrying that the coverage of the issues regarding terrorism by the international media including that of the Danish media has not always been fair, and in line with this understanding.

I would like to enclose herewith notes regarding Turkey's approach about the fight against PKK and DAESH/ISIL which are both terrorist organizations, regardless of their encounter against each other on the ground due to their own interests.

C.C.:

- Mr. Søren Espersen
Chairman
Foreign Policy Committee

- Mr. Nick Hækkerup
Chairman
Foreign Affairs Committee

I would like to stress that Turkey, being at the forefront of DEASH/ISIL threat, has been taking immediate action and precautions in all dimensions countering terrorism. Turkey also continues to fight against the PKK terrorism which has pervaded into the southeastern cities of the country, breaking the so-called ceasefire after the general elections in June 2015, not allowing for a democratic solution to the Kurdish issue. It is obvious that PKK terrorism also takes advantage of the situation in the south of the Turkish borders. This could not be tolerated by any government that is responsible, fore and utmost, for maintaining the territorial integrity and unity of the country.

I hope that the attached notes will shed some light on our attitude towards these terrorist organizations. I would like to stress that Turkey expects Allies, Partners and Friends to continue to display their support and solidarity with Turkey clearly and publicly regarding our fight against the terrorist groups.

I would appreciate it if you could kindly distribute these notes among the members of the esteemed European Affairs Committee.

Best regards .



Mehmet DÖNMEZ
Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey

Encl. as stated

TURKEY'S FIGHT AGAINST DEASH/ISIL

Turkey's efforts to secure its border with Syria and counter oil smuggling

- Turkey has 911 kilometers land border with Syria and 331 kilometres with Iraq (Map 1). Turkey conducts a zero-tolerance policy regarding illegal cross-border activities. It employs effective and robust measures to prevent smuggling activities all over Turkey, particularly oil, with a focus in the border areas.

(Map.1)



- Allegations of oil trade with DEASH and other terrorist organizations in Iraq and Syria are baseless and we reject them. It is not surprising that there is no evidence in support of these allegations.
- Oil smuggling along Turkey's south-eastern borders is not a new phenomenon. Turkey has been victimized by this phenomenon for decades, losing millions in tax revenue, and the Government has been actively fighting oil smuggling and the use of smuggled oil in gas stations all around the country through inspections and enhanced legislation, in particular since the beginning of the 2000s. In this context, the Anti-Smuggling Law was adopted in 2003, and a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry was set up in 2005 to investigate oil smuggling, which led to the revision of the Petroleum Market Law in 2006. In 2012, the Action Plan on Countering Oil Smuggling was revised. A Circular Order (2012/19) by Prime Ministry for enhanced measures were introduced. A legislation was passed on April 11, 2013, which increased the penalties for smuggling of oil as well as the sale of smuggled oil in gas stations in the country.

- After the beginning of the Syrian crisis, in response to increasing lawlessness at the other side of the borders, Turkish law enforcement and security forces stepped up their efforts to counter all threats to our security including smuggling activities stemming from Syria.
- These enhanced measures targeting smuggling networks were introduced in 2012, and preceded the capture of two major oil fields in Syria and Iraq by DEASH/ ISIL in June and July 2014 and months before the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2170 in August 2014 and 2199 in February 2015 respectively.

(Pic.1)

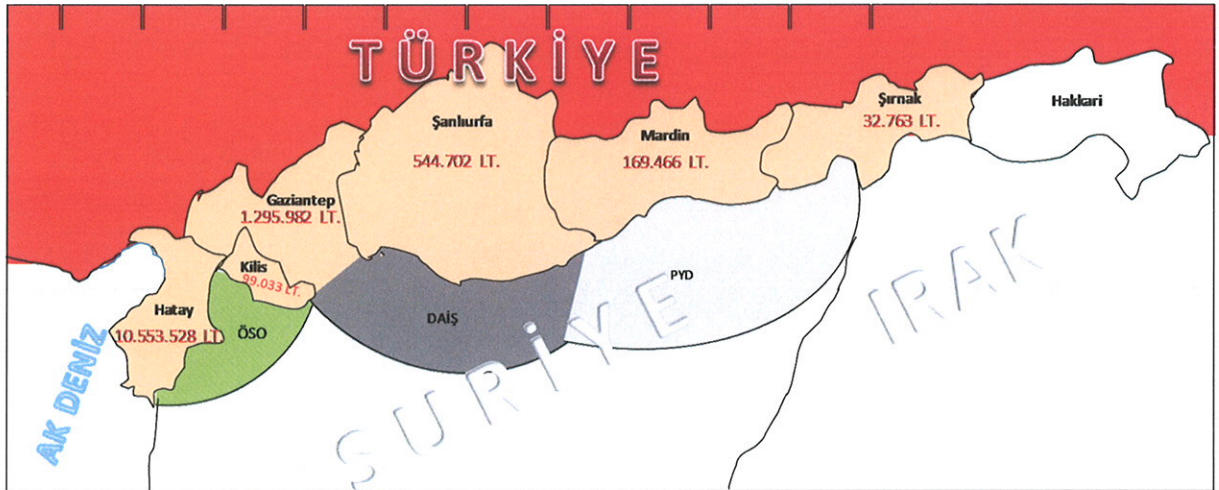


(Pic.2)

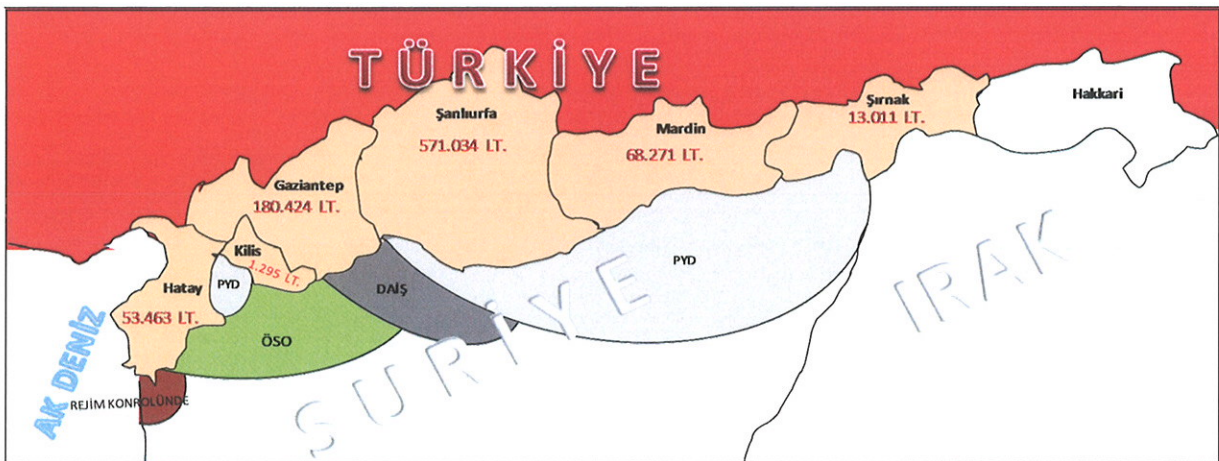


- Turkey, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 2199 (2015) regularly provides information to the UN Security Council Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee about the incidents of smuggled oil and amount of oil seized in the border area with Syria and Iraq although the link between material seized and DESAH/ISIL or ANF terrorist groups cannot be established. Due to enhanced and effective border security measures amount of smuggled oil is decreased considerably. This is clear indication of Turkey's determination to fight any illicit trade activity across our borders. Amount of oil seized at Syrian border cities in 2014 and 2015 is indicated below. (Map.2, 3)
- While in 2014, 79 million liters (21 million gallons) of smuggled oil was intercepted by the Turkish law enforcement and customs authorities, in the first ten month of 2015 this amount decreased to 1.220 cubic meters (1,22 million litres-322,289 gallons) 300 kilometers of illegal pipelines, which are often little more than hoses used for oil smuggling across the Syrian border, were destroyed (Pic.1 and 2).

(Map.2, 2014)



(Map.3, 2015)



Enhanced measures for border security

- Only two border gates are operating at Syrian border area and no vehicle transit is allowed. Goods, not subject to UN sanctions, are unloaded at zero point and delivered to the other side of the border after customs check.
- Measures at the Turkish-Syria and Turkish-Iraq borders are enhanced by additional personnel, patrols and equipment.
- Overall land borders of Turkey (with Iran, Bulgaria, Greece, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iraq and Syria) are secured by 50.000 military personnel. Within the framework of enhanced security measures at Syrian border, number of the personnel of the existing 12 Border Battalions which was 12.000 in 2104, has been increased to 20.000.
- New units of air defense and reconnaissance have been added to the battalions.
- 90 percent of the operations of unmanned air vehicles are focused in Syrian border area to detect illegal crossing and smuggling activities.
- Turkey has also strengthened physical security measures along its 911 kilometers border with Syria. More specifically, the number of border patrol stations are increased, 375,6 kilometers length of trenches are dug, 153,3 kilometers barbed wire installed, 3,3 kilometers security wall and 19,8 kilometers of movable concrete wall formed, 26,3 kilometers of accordion barrier systems positioned, 422.630 border illumination poles installed, 79,5 kilometers embankment (3x3 m.) formed, 1,217 kilometers length of border patrol path improved and 7,8 kilometers road constructed (Pic. 3, 4).

(Pic.3)

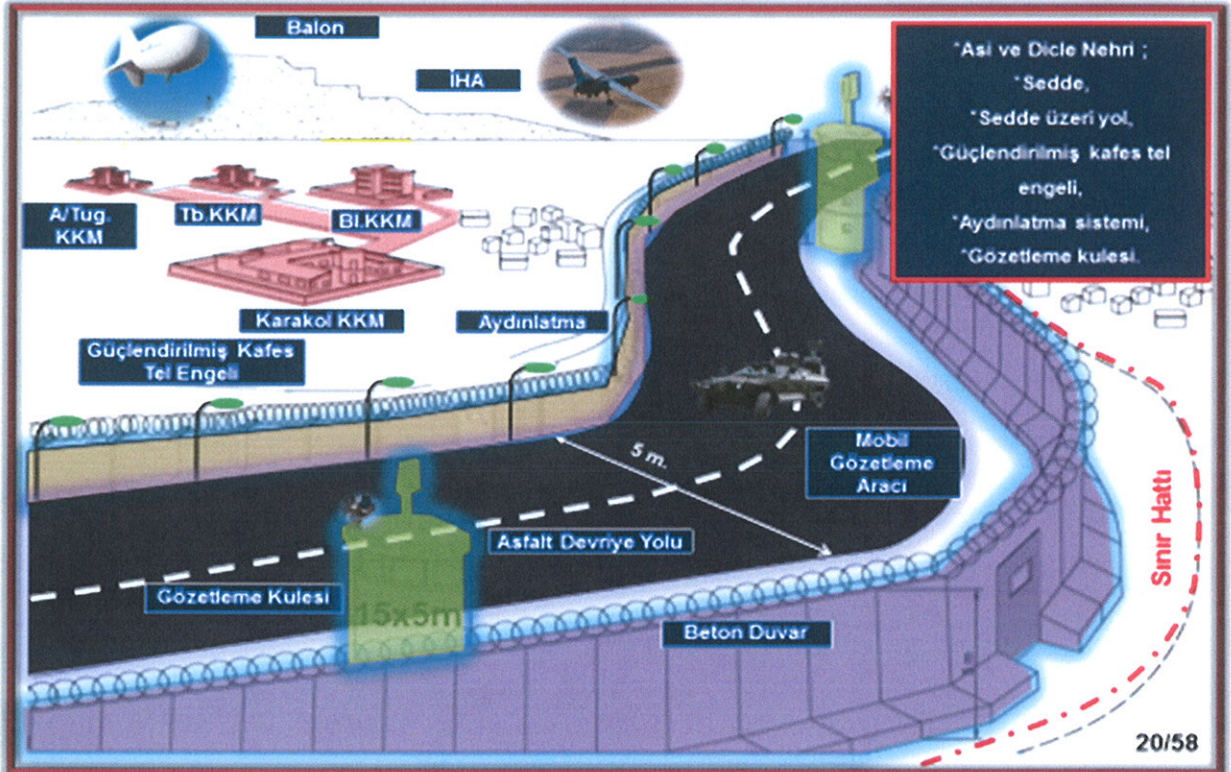


(Pic. 4)



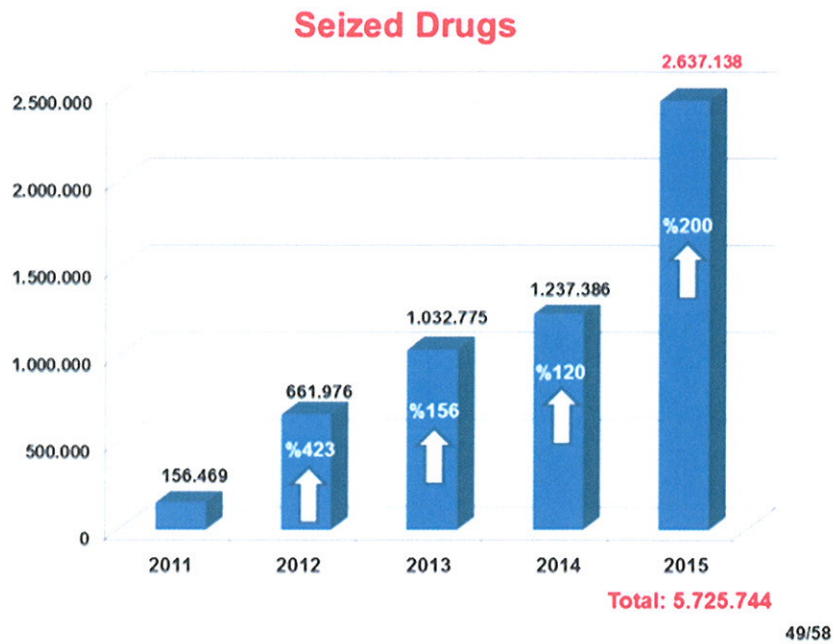
- Furthermore, Turkey is in the process of establishment of “Syrian border physical security system” which includes construction of 151 kilometers of wall and it is expected to cost 81 million US Dollars (Fig.1).

Syrian border physical security system



- Turkish security forces also employs effective measures to prevent drug and cigarette smuggling across Syrian borders. Amount of seized drugs and cigarettes is shown in graphs below in graph 1 and 2.

(Graph.1)

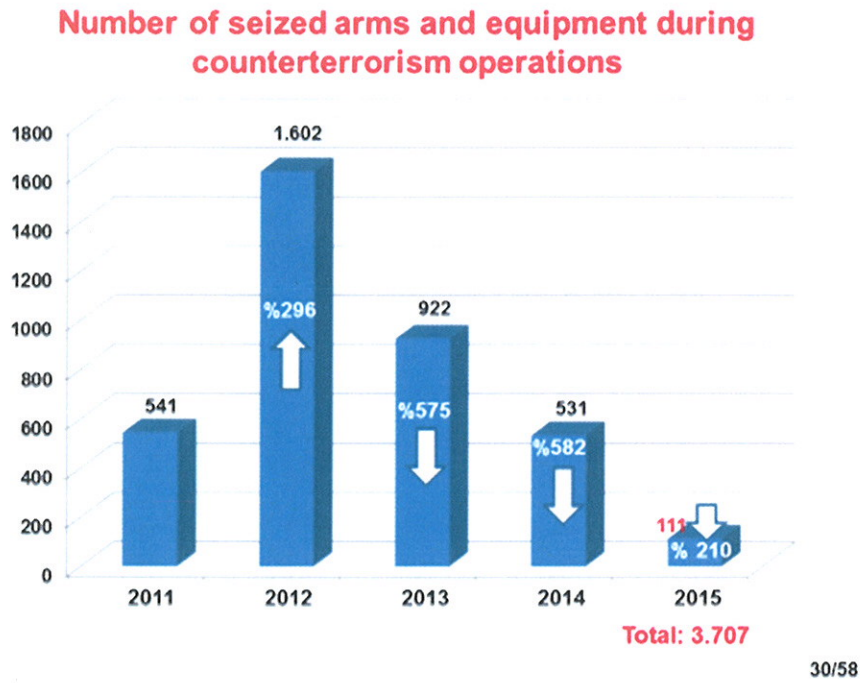


(Graph.2)



- Number of seized arms and equipment during counterterrorism operations against PKK is listed in Graph 3 and in Table 1. At the same time transfer of such arms from conflict zones to Turkey poses a great security risk to Turkey. In this vein 30 suicide bomber vest seized in Turkey which were brought from Syria confirms level of this threat. Number of intercepted persons while illegal crossing at Syrian border is reflected in Table 2.

(Graph.3)



(Table.1)

MATERIALS SEIZED FROM TERRORIST GROUPS (pkk, daesh,dhkp/c, mlkp)	
SINCE 6 OCTOBER 2014	
PLASTIC and CHEMICAL EXPLOSIVE	11.087,4 KG.
IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES (Molotov, Hand Grenade, etc.)	9.459
GUNS	1.600
HEAVY WEAPONS	787
BULLETS	212.261

(Table.2)

**INTERCEPTED PERSONS ON TURKISH – SYRIAN BORDER
WHILE ILLEGAL CROSSING
(Between 15 June – 29 December 2015)**

Syrian Citizens	Third Country Citizens	Total
114.084	1.949	116.033

Notes:

-- **Peak:** 14-28 September 2015 (12.275 persons were intercepted)

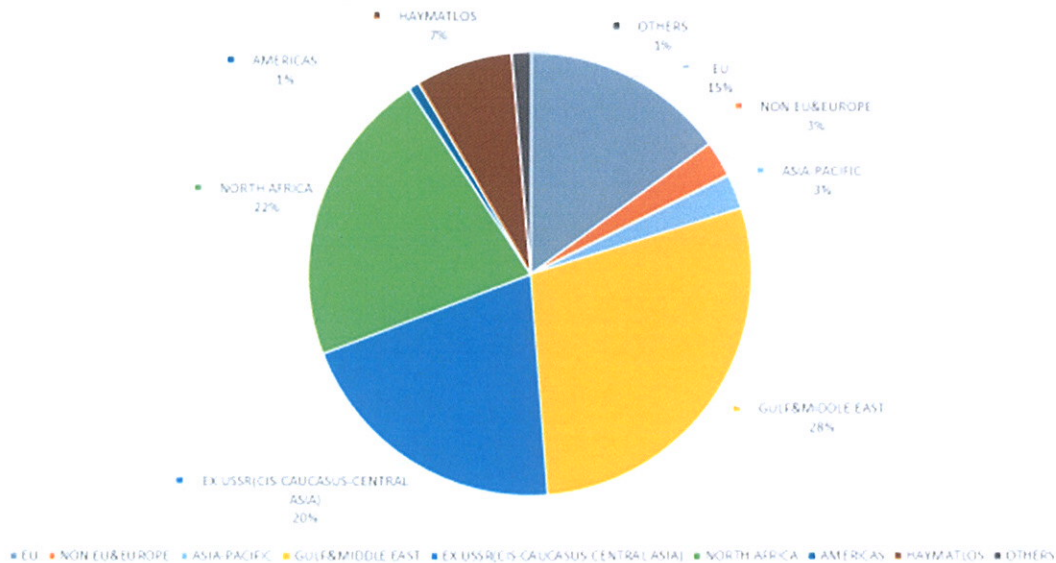
-- **Low:** 20-29 November 2015 (3.069 persons were intercepted)

Prevention of Foreign Terrorist Fighters' (FTF) travel

- Turkey has begun to counter threat of foreign terrorist fighters since 2011 and called for source countries to take necessary legal and administrative measures to prevent departure and travel of FTFs from their countries. In this regard, Turkey has included more than 35.500 (35.970) foreigners in the no-entry list since the Syrian crisis erupted. More than 2.800 (2.896) foreigners were deported since 2011 in the context of measures against foreign fighters. Regional distribution of suspected FTFs in Turkey's no-entry list is shown below (Chart.1).

(Chart.1)

NO ENTRY LIST (Distribution by Regions-2011-Dec 2015)



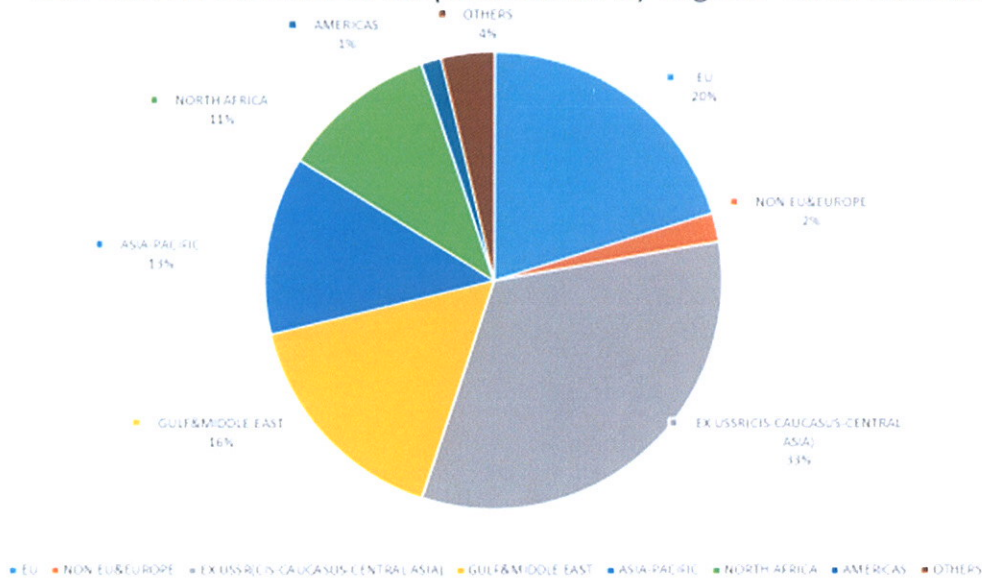
- Turkey informs the Embassies in Ankara by Note Verbal about travel plans of foreigners placed under detention due to their affiliation with DEASH/ISIL or other terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq. MFA requested e mail addresses from Embassies in Ankara for urgent notification
- In order to prevent FTFs from reaching the conflict areas via Turkey, security measures have been reinforced, including new risk analysis units at the airports and enhanced passenger screening and security checks in regions adjacent to the Syrian border. Risk Analysis Units (RAU) have also been deployed to major bus terminals. Until now, around **7.500** people were checked by these Units and more than **1.700** of them were denied entry to Turkey (Table.3). Regional distribution of deported FTFs from Turkey is shown below (Chart.2).

Table.3

Denied entry at the airports by RAU April 2014- 14 January 2016	1.745
Intercepted by RAU after entering Turkey	551
Third Country citizens intercepted while illegal border crossing at the Syrian border (15.06.2015-29.12.2015)	1.949
Total	4.245

(Chart.2)

DEPORTED INDIVIDUALS (Distribution by Regions- 2011-Dec 2015)



- Since the beginning of 2015, (as of 14 January 2016) 1,709 individuals, including 556 foreign nationals, have been detained and 474 persons under arrest due to their affiliation with DEASH/ISIL.
- In accordance with UNSCR 2178(2014), the source countries have the primary obligation to prevent movements of such persons travelling to join terrorist organizations in the first place. All transited countries until FTFs reach their destinations have responsibility to prevent their travel. International efforts should also be focusing on destruction of recruiting and facilitation networks that operate throughout the source countries and prevent dissemination of extremism propaganda.
- Therefore, priority should be spotting and stopping foreign fighters travelling to conflict zones, including Syria and Iraq, at their country of departure. If that fails, than our priority is to stop them at the first port of entry. For that, we need timely, concrete, actionable and full information sharing from source countries about suspected persons of terrorism.
- Several different sample cases are listed below regarding FTFs travel to conflict zones:

FTFs reaching Turkey after travelling through transit countries

In December 2015, The Tajikistan Interpol NCB sent bulletins and diffusion messages for the use of Turkish Interpol NCB regarding 22 Tajik citizens who were suspected to have travelled to Syria for joining DEASH/ISIL. The information about the subjects revealed that in this sample of 22 persons, 21 had been reported to have travelled to or resided in Russian Federation before allegedly travelling to Turkey.

In the case of one individual his travel date to Russia was reported for 2008 and his travel to Turkey with the purpose of travelling to Syria is reported as 2014. In another cases, two individuals are reported to have travelled to Russia as a migrant workers in 2012 and 2013, with no specific date for their travels to Turkey.

The 21 cases indicate that the FTFs from Tajikistan have been using Russian Federation as a hub with short and long term residence before their alleged travels to Turkey. The details about possible links and communication among these persons and their process of radicalization before their travel to Russian Federation is unknown.

FTFs who have been intercepted after entry to Turkey

- Swedish Interpol Unit have notified their Turkish counterparts on 14.01.2013 at 22:15 that individual "A"- a Bosnian citizen living in Sweden- was believed to be travelling to Syria. After investigation, it was established that "A" was currently in Gaziantep. He was arrested on 15.01.2013 at 00:30, merely 2 hours later than the notification of the Swedish authorities.

- After the terrorist attacks that took place in Paris on 13-14 November 2015, French Interpol Unit have notified all countries that Individual "B"- a Moroccan citizen- is believed to have connections with the terrorist attack. After the investigation, it was found out that "B" entered to Turkey on 14 November 2015 just after the Paris attacks took place. He was arrested in Antalya on 16 November 2015.

Individuals who have been denied entry due to timely info shared by departure country

- On 29 April 2015 USA authorities informed the Turkish authorities that a USA citizen named "A" is flying to İstanbul and that he intends to cross over to Syria. He was intercepted in İstanbul Atatürk Airport the same day and interviewed by Risk Analysis Units (RAU). During the interview "A" stated that he was in Turkey as a tourist, he plans to travel to Batman and does not have a return ticket and no hotel reservation. Risk Analysis Units declared the person as inadmissible and sent him back to Canada on 1 May 2015.

- On 4 May 2015 Swedish authorities informed Turkish counterparts that Swedish citizens "A" and "B" would be arriving to Istanbul and that they had the intention to cross to Syria. When they arrived to Istanbul Ataturk Airport RAU detected another prospective FTF named "C" was in the same plane. Their luggage contained camouflage gear. Swedish authorities were informed about the three FTFs who were sent back from İstanbul to Stockholm on 5th of May. However they tried to re-enter Turkey from Greece through sea border gate in Bodrum on the 12th of May, and they were denied entry.

- Turkish security officials, while countering a number of terrorist organizations based in Iraq and Syria, are also responsible for providing law and order for 2.5 millions Syrians and more than 300 thousand Iraqis who are under our temporary protection.
- FTF challenge creates a huge burden on our security and administrative structures who are already facing the challenge of PKK and DHKP/C terrorism. Furthermore, Turkey has been targeted by the terrorist entities commissioned by Syrian regime. Two years ago in the town of Reyhanlı, 52 people were killed by such a group (Mihraç Ural is the leader of terrorist group named Mukavemi Es-Suriyyi/THKPC/Acilciler).

28 January 2016

Note on PKK and the recent developments

Since its foundation in 1984, more than 40 thousand people lost their lives because of PKK terrorism. PKK's ideology is founded on revolutionary Marxism-Leninism and separatist ethno-nationalism. PKK wants to suppress the diversity of Turkey, prevent participation and integration of Turkey's citizens of Kurdish origin and intimidate the people in the region.

PKK's primary targets include police, military, economic, and social assets in Turkey. PKK also attacks on civilians and diplomatic and consular facilities. PKK is involved in extortion, arms smuggling, and drug trafficking.

Turkey's tourism industry, economic infrastructure, educational institutions, teachers, hospitals, public and private enterprises particularly in southeast Turkey have been the main targets of PKK terrorists. It uses a wide range of method to carry out acts of terror ranging from attacking infrastructure, various facilities, schools and ambulances, kidnapping nurses, customs officials to using cyanide to poison drinking water supplies; and engaging in unconventional tactics, assassination to drive-by shootings, executing uncooperative civilians, ambushes, kidnapping etc.

Following the power vacuum in the north of Iraq after the Gulf War, PKK established camps in various points around the Qandil Mountain where they receive training and infiltrate to Turkey to carry out attacks.

PKK's funding is based on variety of sources. For instance, in European countries, parties and concerts are organized by branch groups in the form of façade organizations constitute a source for financing of terrorism. Besides affiliate organizations, there are sympathizer organizations which perform legitimate or semi-legitimate commercial activities and donations. In a number of European countries there are ongoing investigations and court cases related to financing of PKK terrorism.

PKK is also into organized crime, illegal human smuggling and drug trafficking. On 14 October 2009, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) targeted the senior leadership of the PKK, designating Murat Karayılan, the head of the PKK, and high-ranking members Ali Rıza Altun and Zübeyir Aydar as significant foreign narcotics traffickers. On 20 April 2011, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced the designation of PKK founders Cemil Bayık and Duran Kalkan and other high-ranking members as Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers (SDNT) pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act.

Turkey is well aware that solving the problem of terrorism requires a multidimensional approach that includes social, politic, economic and other components.

With a view to implementing a multidimensional and comprehensive strategy in combating PKK terrorism, **along with the sweeping scope of reforms, the Turkish Government also took the initiative to start a process in 2012 aiming to put an end to the terrorist violence. In 2014, Government introduced a law that enables legal ground for negotiations and**

more recently renewed the roadmap to address social, economic and political aspects with a comprehensive approach.

During the past 4 years Turkish Government has heavily invested in developing a process where unprecedented and very bold steps to end the PKK terrorism have been taken. Reforms that enhanced our democracy and rule of law have been introduced. Cultural and social-economic grievances particularly voiced by our citizens of Kurdish ethnic origin have been addressed.

Regrettably however, the PKK continued to exploit every opportunity to sabotage the process. It resorted to act of terrorism in the form of attacks against public order and security by burning schools, kidnapping civilians, attacking security forces, destroying economic infrastructure etc.

The “ceasefire” was broken by the PKK with a view to impose its own agenda following the elections which took place on the 7th of June.

On 11 July 2015, PKK declared that the “ceasefire” was over. Only a few days later, PKK issued another declaration announcing that they would target infrastructures such as dams and road constructions as well as companies which construct them and its violent attacks followed soon after.

Since July 20th (as of January 28th), **242 members** of the Turkish police, gendarmerie, military and **114 civilians** have been killed (**total: 356**); **1.361 security** personnel and **577 civilians** wounded (**total: 1.938**); **14 security** personnel and **110 civilians** kidnapped (**total: 124**) by the PKK terrorist organization.

As the counterterrorist operations by Turkey against DAESH, DHKP-C and the PKK continued, PKK declared “autonomous administrations” in a number of other cities and the PKK’s senior figures called the Kurdish origin people and particularly the youngsters in Turkey to uprising and rebel.

In settlements where PKK declared so called autonomous administrations, it dug trenches and set up barricades and ambushes to cut off access to public services, including in the fields of health, education etc. and to prevent the entry of security forces.

It used and continues to use weapons such as RPGs in urban areas which have high potential of endangering local population, while the security forces use unmanned aerial vehicles to make sure that no civilians are harmed.

What PKK is actually currently doing is trying to assure its defenses by blending with civilians. Terrorists dig in, including in the urban areas and they hide behind civilians.

Blending in with the civilians through using urban areas with that purpose is a tactic used by many terror organizations around the world. It is also employed by DAESH/ISIL acting in Syria and in Iraq. **In acting in such a way terrorist organizations hope to pit security units against civilians.**

In the PKK terminology this tactic is called “**Urban Warfare Based on the Rural**”. Duran Kalkan had actually released a book in 2012 with that purpose named as such (Kıra Dayalı Şehir Savaşçılığı).

Turkish security units, aware of the PKK tactic to blend in with the civilians carry out their operations in a very careful manner and with full respect to rule of law. Curfews are declared for a limited period of time with the purpose of protecting civilians as necessary.

In certain cities, as in Silopi, Şırnak civilians were removed from their houses in Silopi, a town in Şırnak, to safe spots by security forces. They are sheltered places such as sports halls initially, before being moved to the houses of their relatives in calm districts.

In Turkey, it is possible for victims of terrorism to obtain compensation from the state. Applications in this regard continue. **Deputy Prime Minister has already declared that the Government would compensate the losses of the people affected by terrorist activities.**

Turkey is fighting against PKK terrorism. Kurds and terrorism should be conceptually disassociated. Kurds are the integral part of our nation. An overwhelming majority of Kurds, widely dispersed throughout the country are law abiding citizens. This majority is totally integrated into the society and economic, social and cultural life.

PKK neither represents the Kurds nor their expectations. The most obvious indication in this respect has been the results of the November elections. Election showed that the people living in southeastern Anatolia are on the side of those who favor peaceful politics.

In fact, in the TGNA there are many deputies with Kurdish ethnic background in a number of political parties. There is also a political party whose 59 members are overwhelmingly from the region. In other words, despite the fact that there is a legitimate political basis and infrastructure for any expectation to be brought up and addressed in constitutional institutions through the legitimate means, PKK excludes this option and resorts to terrorist acts.

Several reform packages and additional measures to promote economic, social and cultural rights also address the grievances of people of Kurdish origin that the PKK terror organization tries to exploit. These improvements were hailed by many international human rights mechanisms, human rights observers and defenders as major steps. (Some examples of the steps that has been taken in the recent years has been listed in the attachment.)

Turkey is determined to continue the reform process aimed at further protection and promotion of human rights. The government is also ready and willing to go further on the peace process if the PKK fulfills its promise to lay down its arms.

Turkey is currently exposed to threat of terrorism from three major terrorist organizations, namely DAESH/ISIL, PKK and DHKP-C. It is conducting simultaneous operations against all three.

We expect Allies, Partners and Friends to continue to display their support and solidarity with Turkey clearly and publicly regarding our fight against the terrorist groups. We also expect that the opportunistic and misinformation campaign of the PKK terrorist organization which aims to distort the purpose of the operations carried out against PKK targets not be given credit, and rely on the information provided by the Turkish authorities.

Some examples of the steps that has been taken in the recent years has been listed in the attachment.

-With the Third EU Harmonization Package passed in 2002, opening up private courses for teaching different languages and dialects which include Kurdish was made possible. For this, relevant infrastructure was laid and the opening of these courses was enabled in 2003.

-In 2003, the related paragraph in the Law on Population Registration was changed; allowing the citizens to name their children as they wish and ending their suffering due to this issue.

-This development regarding languages was sustained in the later periods, as well. In this respect, legal barriers to broadcasting in languages and dialects other than Turkish by both private TV channels and TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Channel) were removed in 2003.

-With the regulation prepared in this context, radio and television broadcasts in different languages and dialects have been made possible. Finally in 2008, this issue was given legal guarantee and all barriers on the issue in private radios, televisions and TRT were removed.

-Within this framework, a channel of TRT (TRT 6) started full time Kurdish broadcasting. In 2009, it was made possible for private radios and televisions to broadcast in this language continuously. With these amendments, broadcasting in different languages and dialects has been provided with legal guarantees; and TRT started broadcasts in Kurdish and Arabic.

-With amendments made in the by law in 2009, convicts were allowed to speak in languages other than Turkish on the phone, in the event that the convict declared that s/he or the person s/he would talk to does not speak Turkish.

- With a later regulation, speaking Kurdish in courts also became possible.

-The “Institute of Living Languages in Turkey” affiliated to Mardin Artuklu University was founded in 2009 within this framework, and is composed of the Department of Kurdish Language and Culture, the Department of Arabic Language and Culture, the Department of Assyrian Language and Culture, and Master’s Degree courses on Kurdish Language and Culture and Assyrian Language and Culture. The Kurdish Language and Literature Department was established as part of the Faculty of Letters of the same university.

-Another “Institute of Living Languages” was established in Bingöl University which has the following undergraduate and graduate programs: the Department of Kurdish Language and Literature and Thesis/Non-thesis Master’s Degree on Kurdish Language and Literature. The Kurdish Language and Literature Department was established within the Faculty of Science and Letters of the same university.

-The Social Sciences Institute of Muş Alparslan University has created a Kurdish Language and Literature Graduate Degree Program and Science and Education Faculty of the same university has created the Kurdish Language and Literature Department.

-The Faculty of Letters of Tunceli University created the Eastern Language and Literature Department, the Zazaki Language and Literature Department, the Kurmanji Language and Literature Department as well as the Arabic Language and Literature Department. The Social

Sciences Institute of Dicle University in Diyarbakır created a Kurdish Language and Culture Master's Program.

-Higher Education Council opened up "Kurdish Language and Literature Department" within Dicle University in June 2012

-Living language Institute have been activated, where Kurdish is studied, under the Rectorship of Siirt University by the decision of the board of Ministers in 2013.

-The scope of the Law on Political Parties is broadened with an amendment in 2010 and legal obstacles to the right to conduct political propaganda have been removed. Hence, it was made possible for political parties to address people in various languages and dialects including in Kurdish.

-The Ministry of Culture has started publication of some important Kurdish language and literature works such as 'Mem-u Zin'. Some performance arts have also begun to be put on stage in Kurdish by the General Directorate of National Theaters. For the first time, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's Council for Movie Support provided financial support to a movie containing frequent Kurdish dialogue (İki Dil Bir Bavul).

-With the support of Ministry of Culture and Tourism the play "Hamlet" was staged in Ankara in Kurdish by Diyarbakır City Theater.

-The national television TRT started airing a new channel called "TRT XEBER"; a Kurdish news channel. With the joint efforts of TRT and Diyarbakır Governorship, an album is produced consisting of Kurdish folk songs. Moreover, in the guide to the 24th era members of TBMM (Turkish Parliament) the parliamentarians' knowledge of the Kurdish language is included for the first time.

-In call centers founded by certain governorates for the purpose of increasing the quality of public services, Kurdish speaking personnel have been employed in order to facilitate communication with citizens who don't speak Turkish.

-In 2012, the local religious leaders in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey (called "Mele") respected and considered important by the local people started to be employed by the government as "religious officials".