

Militancy/Terrorism

14

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Turkey Alert: Nine PKK militants planning attack against security forces arrested in Izmir Province on August 14

Please be advised:

- The official Turkish news agency announced that nine Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militants were arrested in multiple locales during nine simultaneous security operations in Izmir Province on August 14, with some reports indicating that the arrests were made in "central Izmir" and in the province's northern Menemen District.
- The arrestees are reportedly among 12 PKK militants suspected of plotting "armed and Molotov Cocktail" assaults targeting security forces in an unspecified area, in an attack meant to coincide with the August 15 anniversary of the first PKK-perpetrated attack, which was conducted on August 15, 1984 in Siirt Province's Eruh and Hakkari Province's Semdinli districts.
- During the raid, two firearms, ammunition, and digital material were seized.



Assessments & Forecast:

1. Although counter-militancy raids occur periodically in Izmir Province, they typically do not entail foiled plots of attacks, thus making this event notable. We assess that the report of a planned attack for August 15 is credible, as the seized firearms indicate that the militants had the necessary tools in order to conduct an operation. It is likely that the arrestees were planning to carry out an attack in more central locales in Konak District, likely against targets affiliated with the Turkish authorities, for instance government buildings, with shootings potentially directed against security forces manning the locales. The targeting of such sensitive infrastructure at this time would be highly symbolic and would bolster the image of the PKK, as it coincides with the first PKK-perpetrated act of militancy. This is particularly as such attacks have recently been infrequently recorded in Turkey's major cities, with the bulk of operations concentrated in more outlying areas in the southeast.
2. However, the foiling of a potential act of militancy prior to materialization attests to the relative capabilities of security forces to mitigate the threat stemming from PKK militants. _ Additional security raids are likely to be conducted over the coming hours and days across Izmir Province in order to locate the additional three militants involved in the incident. The intelligence likely to be extracted from the arrestees could lead to further arrests of PKK operatives across the province, including in Konak District, in the near term.

Recommendations:

1. Travel to Istanbul and Ankara may continue, although travelers are advised to maintain heightened vigilance in central areas due to the threat of militancy, as well as regular anti-government protests and occasional incidents of unrest in these locales. Contact us at Operations@max-security.com or +44 20-3540-0434 for itinerary and contingency support options.
2. Those operating or residing in Izmir Province over the coming hours and days are advised to maintain heightened vigilance and allot for disruptions given the potential for elevated security protocols and additional raids targeting PKK militants in this locale.
3. Avoid nonessential travel to the immediate vicinities of government buildings, police stations, political party offices, popular public places and shopping centers, as well as Western institutions and places frequented by Westerners, and places of worship due to the threat of militancy.
4. Avoid nonessential travel to Turkey's southern and eastern provinces, while also avoiding all travel to border areas with Syria and Iraq, given the increased risk of militancy and spillover violence.